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The SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness



"LADY MARJORY'S UNDIES"—A Complete Novelette
by Anthony Wharton

"THE MORALS OF PITTSBURGH"—A Penetrating Article

"ENGLISH SOCIETY AND THE AMERICAN SNOB"—
By a Former Member of Parliament

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The SMART SET

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CONTENTS

HIS WORST ENEMIES	James Nicholas Young	129
HÉLAS, JEAN-JACQUES—I	Durbin Rowland	130
LADY MARJORY'S UNDIES (<i>complete novelette</i>)	Anthony Wharton	131
THE LAST ARISTOCRAT	Charles Divine	151
THE SINS OF THE FOUR HUNDRED (<i>third article</i>)	— — —	155
THE LITTLE KISS	Arthur Hillary	162
IT IS ONLY THEN	Muna Lee	162
A MAN OF THIRTY-EIGHT	Henry Altimus	163
THE THOUSANDTH WOMAN	Charles Stokes Wayne	169
A TRAGEDY	Elmore Allen	178
DANDELION	John Russell McCarthy	178
ENGLISH SOCIETY AND THE AMERICAN SNOB	By a Former Member of Parliament	179
AT LAST	George B. Jenkins, Jr.	187
AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING	Robert Newton	188
THE COMMONSENSE OF MONSIEUR LEBEL	Achmed Abdullah	189
HOMAGE	John McClure	194
TIMS AND THE LITTLE GODS	L. Blackledge Lippmann	195
A FANTASY	Bliss Carman	200
THE ROOM WITHOUT A NUMBER (<i>one-act play</i>)	Robert H. Davis	201
THAT WOMAN	June Gibson	207
THE CHILD-HEART	Margaret Widdemer	208
DOCUMENT FOUND IN A MIDDLE-AGED GENTLEMAN	Horatio Winslow	209
THE MORALS OF PITTSBURGH	By a Pittsburgher	215
THE THOUGHT	John Hall Wheelock	220
MINIATURES OF WOMEN	Helen Woljeska	221
THE FALL OF A GENTLEMAN	L. M. Hussey	225
IRISH KISSES	Morris Gilbert	230
THE JACKAL	Paul Hervey Fox	231
CAOINE	Harold Crawford Stearns	238
THE GAME AND ITS RULES	Stanley Northwood	239
THE SCANDAL AT TOAD-IN-THE-HOLE	Maurice Joy	245
SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA	Jacques Yarnell	250
CONTEMPORARY TOXICOLOGY	L. M. Hussey	251
THOUGHTS BEFORE KILLING ONE'S WIFE	Robert Garland	256
"PRÉSENTEZ ARMES!" (<i>in the French</i>)	Felician Nacla	257
THE FOLLIES OF 1917, B. C.	George Jean Nathan	259
THE INFERNAL FEMININE	H. L. Mencken	266

AND

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The SMART SET

The Aristocrat Among Magazines

HIS WORST ENEMIES

By James Nicholas Young

S AID a certain King to his Prime Minister:

"I have recently found poison in my soup and a bomb under my bed. In some subtle way I have received a hunch that I have enemies. Find the worst of them and bring them to me."

The Prime Minister, who had recently completed a correspondence course in "Efficiency," next day appeared before the King with a batch of ninety-nine enemies.

The King, as was customary on a morning following an evening, had a splitting headache. However he was unusually amiable.

"I desire," he remarked, as he sipped his bromo-seltzer meditatively, "that my worst enemies be shot immediately."

"All of your worst enemies, sire?" queried the Prime Minister, endeavoring to suppress a grin.

"All!" blithely sang out the King, lighting a perfumed cigarette and gracefully inserting a cocaine needle into his right leg.

It may be mentioned, *en passant*, that the King was most unpopular in his kingdom. For years his operations upon the stock exchange had been so successful, his dissipations had been so continuous, his squandering of opportunities so calamitous, that he was universally hated.

"So he wishes to execute his worst enemies," mused the Prime Minister to himself.

Then, smiling gleefully, he held a brief conference with the Chief Executioner.

The Chief Executioner, chuckling joyously, spoke a few words to the soldiers.

The soldiers, scarcely able to suppress their mirth, prepared their rifles.

"All of my worst enemies are now to be executed," announced the King, "I command that not one be spared!"

"Fire!" yelled the grinning Chief Executioner.

The very first victim to fall was His Royal Highness.



HÉLAS, JEAN-JACQUES—!

By Durbin Rowland

I WAS young: and I had been reading Rousseau's "Confessions." You may remember that the dear old sentimental tells us that, next to being in love with two women at the same time, he never knew a greater pleasure than that derived from stretching himself out full length in a rowboat on a summer's day to be carried downstream in complete abandonment. To me, an imaginative reader, this kind of diversion sounded alluring: moreover, I fear it was one of the few diversions of the erratic Jean-Jacques that I in these times and in our sadly prosaic country town could safely imitate without running a grave risk of putting myself under the surveillance of the police. You see, although I was past twenty, I was still a member of the Banner Class in the Presbyterian Sunday School.

I thought the thing over a good deal, and finally decided to try out Rousseau's jolly little idea on our unromantic Maumee River at Toledo, Ohio. So one Saturday afternoon I went to Walbridge, which is a park above the town, and hired a rowboat. Everything went well at the start. Removing the cross-seat, I filled the rowboat with rented pillows, and launched from one of the little docks that lay along the wooded bank. I stretched myself out on my couch of pillows in a perfect ecstasy while I floated gently down with the current. It was magnificent: regular Maxfield Parish stuff! There was the great blue sky above, with some small, fleecy clouds drifting high overhead:

now and then a twittering swallow would dart across the prow of my craft, or a huge dragon-fly would hover on golden wings in mid-air above me. Rousseau was right: this was the life! It was all very fine while it lasted. But it did not last long.

The Lady of Shalott kind of thing may have proved a success when perpetrated on a stream that runs past some fine sleepy old English town like Camelot; but in a matter-of-fact setting like the Maumee River at Toledo, Ohio, I have found to my sorrow that it doesn't work by a long shot. Before my little craft had reached the first bridge that spans the river where the town begins and had glided serenely under it, some wharf-rat dangling from a pier yelled out to me: "Hi there! Y'ain't sick or anything, are you?"

And before I had floated on, still stretched out at ease, to the second towering bridge a sputtering police-boat came alongside to tow me ashore. I was somewhat assiduously conducted to the nearest station-house, where I was presented to the desk-sergeant. When questioned concerning my conduct, I endeavored to explain hastily to the desk-sergeant that I had been simply trying out a little idea suggested to me by J. J. Rousseau. The desk-sergeant frowned and reached for the city directory. After some patient research, he closed the book with a bang. "Say!" he thundered at me, "who in hell is this guy J. J. Rousseau anyway!"

Hélas, Jean-Jacques!—*que la vie est morne de nos jours!*



LADY MARJORY'S UNDIES

By Anthony Wharton

Author of *Irene Wycherley, Etc., Etc.*

I

THIS is, perhaps, an unpleasant story. Beyond the confession of a certain sneaking admiration for the accurate and unrelenting accomplishment of a proposed result, I offer no defence—or indeed criticism of any kind—of Miss Barker's behaviour.

But in common justice to a heroine, however erring, I feel bound here, at this very beginning, to emphasize certain differences in the appearance and bodily condition of Bertie Wright on two—for Miss Barker, at least—memorable dates in his career; the first being July 14th, 1914, on which day Bertie drove her down into Surrey in his side-car and asked her to marry him; the second, November 5th, 1914, on which day she first saw him after his return from France, in Birwicb Military Hospital.

II

ON THAT glorious summer afternoon they brought with them the means and materials for a generous afternoon tea, which they made under the fir-trees on Leith Hill. Bertie, having divested himself of his very smart overalls, discovered beneath an equally smart blue serge suit which fitted his very admirable person to perfection.

Something over five feet ten, lean, brown, hard as nails, with laughing grey eyes, blamelessly smooth hair and clean-cut features, he appeared, even to Miss Barker's fastidious and critical eyes, a very satisfactory and pleasant young male to look upon. Also he was

as he looked—cheerful, efficient, imperturbable.

He was, at twenty-four, manager to a motor engineering firm in South London, an uncannily skillful mechanic, an adroit salesman, and a very astute man of his own particular world.

In the irreproachable morning-suit in which he went to church on Sunday mornings he might, Miss Barker had long ago decided, be taken for anyone; that afternoon, as he stood in the sunshine before her and asked her to marry him, she was of opinion that he might even be taken for someone. Her eyes from beneath their long black lashes, strayed calmly over him, wandering lazily from one point of interest to another, questioning, appraising, finding no flaw. And, as I have said before, her standards were very educated and very exacting.

She did not say yes; she did not say no. She was certainly very much in love with this clean, handsome, vigorous-bodied boy, but—well, as you will see, she was a very level-headed young woman. She allowed him to kiss her once or twice, without prejudice, and they returned in the dusk to London, good comrades, perfectly confident, quite content to recognize the prudence of doing nothing in a hurry.

The following week Lady Marjory Lang went to stay with an aunt in Scotland, and Miss Barker—who to Lady Marjory was maid and “Barker,” *tout court*—accompanied her. They were both still in Scotland when Bertie went overseas as a despatch rider.

He wrote her a calm little note the night before he sailed.

"Dearest Winifred:

"I signed on as a despatch rider today and was told that I should be required to go out at once. I go tonight—how and where exactly I have not yet heard. Shall let you know when I have an address. I am sorry it was not possible to see you before going. However, I expect it will be a short business.

"Yours very sincerely,
"Bertie Wright."

And so it happened that she was to remember him always as he stood before her in the sunshine that afternoon on Leith Hill.

III

THIS she did not see. A long, straight, narrow road, bordered with poplars, along which streamed an endless procession of weary, haggard infantry, white with dust, their faces turning every now and then toward a low, timbered ridge some two miles away across a stretch of sun-bathed fields. A farmhouse beside the road in flames, and in the middle of the *pavé*, just opposite the entrance to the farmhouse, two stretcher-bearers on their knees busy with a motionless figure. Leaning against the wall of the farmhouse a motor-bicycle, from the tank of which oil still dripped slowly.

"Shawn't 'ave to carry 'im far," said one of the stretcher-bearers. "'E's as good as gone as it is. Hup!"

IV

HE WAS lying in bed when she next saw him, toward the close of a wet afternoon in November. They had found one of her letters in the flap of his pay-book and had written to ask if she could furnish the names and addresses of any relatives.

He was asleep, so that at first she did not realize the greatness of his misfortune. His head was bandaged, and there were some healing scars on his unshaven face. She turned to the nurse in silent interrogation, and the nurse's

eyes, kindly evasive, at once awakened her suspicion.

"I—we are to be married," she said steadily. "Is he—is there any danger?"

The nurse shook her head, hesitated for some instants, then, divining that here there was no likelihood of hysterics or fainting fits, spoke the succinct and dismaying truth.

"I am very sorry," she said gently. "He is blind—and they have had to amputate his right arm. His head does not seem very clear—yet. But they think that will come all right."

There was a long silence.

"Oh!" said Miss Barker at length, quietly.

She bent over the bed and kissed her boy's lips.

"I won't wake him now," she said, twisting her veil under her very adorable chin. "I shall come again tomorrow. Please don't tell him that I came today."

But next day she could not be sure that he even knew who she was; he seemed dazed and stupid, and when he did speak, spoke of things and people with unfamiliar names. He also swore a good deal, until an agony of pain fell upon him and caused him to moan incessantly until the time came for visitors to leave the hospital.

The nurses were very kind to her, and a wan-faced but cheery Highlander in the next cot to Bertie's, who had lost both legs from the knee downward, made a stout-hearted attempt, by way of distraction, to show her his stumps.

In her room at the dreary little Station Hotel that evening Miss Barker cried undemonstratively at intervals of half an hour or so. It was quite clear to her that Bertie's career as a useful, money-making, ornamental citizen was finished and done with. That right arm, even, might have been dispensed with; but blind . . . and . . . well . . . dull!

What was to be done with a man like that? What was to be done.

Ah! that careless sunlit afternoon on Leith Hill. Bertie. Her own, darling,

splendid boy . . . Her eyes smarted; an oppression, a stifling, suffocating pressure at her heart, a sense of utter loss, utter futility, broke down the barriers of her courage for a little while.

But not for long.

She performed her usual meticulous preparation for going to bed precisely as usual, though perhaps the eyes that looked at her from the mirror as she combed her consolingly beautiful hair were a little more thoughtful than the eyes of any girl of twenty-one have any right to be.

Next morning she returned to London and Lady Marjory.

V

IT IS to be hoped that I have conveyed no misleading impressions with regard to Miss Barker. You must not, for instance, fancy that she was a person with unlimited leisure to devote to her own personal interests. The total number of hours which she had passed in Bertie Wright's company during the two years of their acquaintanceship was not very great, and that total comprised the greater part of her spare time for that period. But Lady Marjory knew—generally—about Bertie Wright, and though a rather careless and rather selfish mistress as a rule, had moments of generosity and thoughtfulness, and had graciously granted three whole days for the excursion to Birwicb.

While her maid arrayed her for dinner, she questioned her with polite sympathy. Blind! How perfectly dreadful! And an arm gone, too! Right arm? How awful! Shocking bad luck. So she continued for a little while, with insincerity apparent enough.

Abruptly, however, to Miss Barker's surprise, she threw away a novel with which she had been beguiling the tedium of the toilet and directed a frankly curious stare upon the reflection of her maid's impassive face.

"What will you do?" she asked sharply. "You won't marry him, will you—now?"

Miss Barker coloured faintly.

"He has nothing to marry on," she answered calmly.

"I think you would be very foolish to marry him, then," said Lady Marjory. "After all, Barker—you—well, you *really* ought to do quite well for yourself, you know—if you take a little trouble. You are an unusually pretty girl—smart, good figure, well-educated. You—it would be a great pity to throw away your whole life like that. A great shame. I know that must seem rather a hateful way of putting it—but still—that's what it comes to in plain English, isn't it? Pick up that book for me, will you? Thanks. Yes. A shame, I think."

She stifled a yawn and resumed the novel. She was twenty, pretty, popular, wealthy, and about to marry the most eligible man of her acquaintance.

But to her annoyance the image of this blind, one-armed Bertie Wright persisted in intruding itself upon her complacency.

"No matter how fond you may have been of him," she said, as she turned from a last searching survey of her image in the long glass, "no girl can really love a man who hasn't got all his legs and arms and things. It isn't possible. It isn't natural. I mean—really love him. You know?"

She smiled a little significant smile and went down to dinner.

Miss Barker's serenity remained undisturbed. For nearly four years now she had known all that there was to know about Lady Marjory. Nothing that Lady Marjory might choose to say or do aroused in her the least spark of resentment. They were all "like that," the Langs; they had, she understood, all been "like that" for several centuries—direct, simple; eager livers, eager lovers. Both Lady Marjory's father and Lady Marjory's brother had done Lady Marjory's maid the honor of pro-offered favor; frankly offered, frankly declined.

She tidied the room methodically, switched off the lights, and retired to her own bedroom to think things over.

VI

OF COURSE Lady Marjory was quite right. She really might do very well for herself if she took a little trouble. Without undue complacency, she was perfectly aware of the graces of person with which a kindly Providence had endowed her, and Lady Marjory's amorous relatives were but two of a long list of "incidents" of the same kind.

Not that the thought of "doing well for herself" in that particular way had ever held the least attraction for her. Without any trace of prudishness, she possessed all the shrewd honesty of the London girl of her class—her father was a police sergeant—and, besides, her position had given her the opportunity of inspecting at close quarters the progress of sundry pilgrims—high and lowly—along the primrose path of naughtiness. And on the whole the game had not seemed to her anything like worth the candle.

But there had been some who, with that little trouble, might, she rather thought, have been induced to a more secure and legitimate dénouement; some, even, who had been quite desperate when they had realized the existence of a preferred and inexplicably obscure rival.

And it was to one of these that Miss Barker's mind turned and returned persistently as she smoked an inferior cigarette over a very small fire in her very small bedroom.

He was a very well-known young man, an intimate friend of Lady Marjory's and of her before-mentioned brother, good-looking, amiable, not unusually stupid, and the possessor of an income, rapidly diminishing, but still expressed in five figures. His name was Arbuthnot—John Wilmhurst Cecil Arbuthnot.

Everybody, except his own relatives, thought a lot of Mr. Arbuthnot; he thought a good deal of himself—though no one ever guessed that; and he had on several occasions manifested a comparatively respectful admiration for

Lady Marjory's maid. He also wrote verse—very, very passionate and cynical and sad—which he published in little slim volumes at his own expense and distributed to his friends, as Lady Marjory put it, at theirs. These, however, were comparatively unimportant details. His chief interest for Miss Barker lay in the fact that he had recently joined the Royal Flying Corps.

He was a fairly frequent visitor at the Langs' house; in point of fact, on that particular Saturday he was dining with them. Very often when he ran up from Farnborough for the week-end he stayed a night or portion of a night, usually on these occasions, returning with "Bulgie," Lady Marjory's wicked little brother, in the small hours of the morning in an extremely confidential and affectionate condition. It would certainly involve taking a little trouble; it would probably involve some very wearisome experiences; it might possibly even involve very unpleasant consequences for Miss Barker.

But I regret to say that after some prolonged and abstracted poking of her little fire, she decided to concentrate upon Mr. Arbuthnot, and having considered herself in her glass attentively for a little while, lit a second cigarette and proceeded to evolve a detailed plan of campaign.

VII

SHORTLY before two o'clock Lady Marjory returned from—well, it does not matter in the least where Lady Marjory had been. She was very sleepy, but quite amiable. Miss Barker put her to bed with all due ceremony and departed once more to her own little room.

"Good night, Barker," were Lady Marjory's last words as she nestled down into her pillows. "I left some letters in papa's study. I was too lazy to open them. Bring them up in the morning, will you?"

Miss Barker smiled a curious little smile as she closed the door softly; the luck was with her, it seemed.

It was then half-past two.

She flitted hastily upstairs, undressed, decided after a moment's consideration to leave her hair untouched, arrayed herself in her best nighty and a pretty silk dressing-gown which had once adorned Lady Marjory's own fair form, enveloped her little white feet in ludicrously tiny slippers, and having satisfied herself that all the house was still, stole down to the study and composed herself with patience to what was destined to prove a somewhat wearisome vigil.

The dressing-gown was of the filmiest texture and the night was an extremely chilly one; but, as she had anticipated, there was a good fire in the study. She ensconced herself in a comfortable chair and listened at first tentatively, then with growing drowsiness, to the noisy passage of some hundreds of motors. They would come in a taxi—if they came.

If they came. An hour passed; an hour and a half; two hours; it seemed to her an eternity.

She fell asleep, awoke with a little shock of fright and stirred the dying ashes cautiously. A quarter to five! Well—she would wait until five. She shivered a little, but was afraid to risk the inevitably noisy replenishment of the fire.

Just before five a taxi stopped outside the house. The study opened into the hall, but its windows did not look into the street. She sprang to her feet, and as the hall door opened, switched on the light.

Two rather noisy voices dropped abruptly to a lower pitch.

"Hello!" said one. "The governor's been out somewhere. Naughty old boy!"

"As for extinction," said another voice, not very clearly, "extinction doesn't trouble me. It doesn't trouble me at all, ole fellow. Extinction—"

"Oh, shut up, you silly ass!" broke in the first voice pleasantly. "Here. Let's go and have a drink with the old governor."

"All right," said the second voice,

without rancour. "But I should like you to have that quite clear. Quite clear. Extinction doesn't trouble me. Death—existence after death—that scares me, I admit. Yes, I admit that quite frankly, dear boy. But as for utter extinction, I—"

Their footsteps were just outside the study door.

Miss Barker moved across to the table on which Lady Marjory's letters lay, gathered them up, put one hand modestly to the lace at her throat, and turned a genuinely blushing face toward the two men who had halted in the doorway and were now staring at her in an astonishment equally unaffected.

They were both fine, broad-shouldered, slim-flanked young animals, good-looking, assured and debonair. Mr. Arbuthnot was in uniform; Bulgie (no one knew why he was called Bulgie—nor is the point of any importance) in mufti. Bulgie was in the process of recovering slowly from the effects of a German machine gun; Mr. Arbuthnot had not yet been "out." He was the possessor of a very determined chin and a pair of pale grey eyes with black irises which looked at every object, however near, as if it was two miles distant. He was the first to speak.

"I'm afraid we're rather intruding, aren't we, old chap?" he said with some solemnity.

"Not at all," said Miss Barker hastily, moving toward the door. "I—Lady Marjory asked me to bring her up something—these letters—and I quite forgot—I woke up and suddenly remembered—I—please forgive me—I had no idea—"

Her confusion was delicious. A letter slipped from her hand. Both young men made a hasty dive, but both were late.

"Please don't run away in such an awful hurry!" said Bulgie, laying a detaining hand on the dressing-gown, as its wearer made another little movement toward the door.

"Oh—but—I must. I really must.

Gracious! What would anyone say if they—"

"Oh, rot," replied Bulgie cheerfully. "Stay and smoke a cigarette with us. I know you're simply longing for a cigarette. Come along!"

He slipped his arm about her waist with the obvious intention of drawing her toward an armchair. She shook herself free with unmistakable anger.

"Stop that!" she ordered indignantly, and endeavored to slip past him; but he barred her way smilingly.

"Tut, tut, tut, tut!" he mocked airily, and essayed to recapture her waist. However, at this point Mr. Arbuthnot, having regarded the little scene at two-mile range with increasing solemnity, intervened.

"Oh, I say, Bulgie," quoth he, in deprecation and with a curious little tremor in his voice, "you're worrying Miss Barker. Cut it out."

"Mind your own business, sweet child," retorted Bulgie somewhat sharply.

Miss Barker dodged Bulgie's third attempt, ran past him and was half-way to her room before he had reached the foot of the stairs.

"Damn you, Arbuthnot," he scowled, returning crestfallen to the study.

"Damn you, old chap," replied his friend, cheerfully.

"What the devil do you mean?" asked Bulgie with another scowl.

"Oh, don't be an ass. You know jolly well that there's nothing wrong with that little girl. You found that out long ago. Why go on so ungracefully?" Mr. Arbuthnot hiccupped slightly. "Let's talk about something else."

They squabbled for a little time longer, and then went slowly up to bed, yawning and growling. Bulgie slammed his bedroom door. Whereupon Mr. Arbuthnot, who still retained some sense of humor, and who had already closed his door quietly, reopened it and, without a smile, shut it again with a crash that re-echoed all through the big house.

He regarded himself as now quits

with Bulgie, who, on the strength of that German machine gun, had been rather patronizing in the earlier part of the evening.

VIII

UPSTAIRS and by this time safely in bed, Miss Barker heard—and guessed quite accurately the reason of—those two slammed doors. Her sense of humour was certainly quite as keen as that of Mr. Arbuthnot, but just at that moment the sounds conveyed to her a much more primitive and unintellectual satisfaction.

She had taken a first step, at some risk, but with most gratifying success. Her frank intention had gone no further than to present herself to Mr. Arbuthnot's notice under conditions more attractive than conventional; but the luck had remained with her, and she felt that she had achieved much more than she had hoped for.

Her next step lay quite clearly before her. Tomorrow—today rather—she would thank Mr. Arbuthnot very, very modestly and earnestly for having protected her from the advances of the wicked Bulgie. It was going to be quite simple. So simple that her mind passed on with dismay to the ending of the adventure, as a thing already assured. Before she fell asleep she got out of bed and scribbled a little protesting note to the blind, stupid boy in his cot at Birwic Hospital.

"Dearest," it ran, *"I don't know when you will be able to have this read to you, but whenever you are able to think about things I want you to know that nothing"* (she underlined "nothing" three times) *"can ever make any difference to me and that I shall always love you—better than I loved even you—before. Darling Bertie, ask some one to write to me for you—to let me know how you are getting on—and what your plans are and how long you think you will have to remain in hospital. I have been thinking of you ever since I saw you. I am always thinking of you. Don't ever forget what I have said."*

You will always be my own darling Bertie."

And she signed it "Winkums," which was Bertie's diminutive for Winifred—a diminutive which, quite accurately, she had always considered inappropriate, but tonight, perhaps conscience-stricken, found homely and consoling.

Winkums! What would he call her—then?

She got back into bed and fell asleep with two little tears still trembling on her long black eyelashes.

IX

TOWARD midday next day as Mr. Arbuthnot was descending the stairs in search of breakfast he encountered a radiant vision in the smartest of black and white which blushed charmingly as it returned his polite good morning, passed him, then halted a few steps higher up and arrested his further progress by a hesitating "Mr. Arbuthnot!"

He turned and went up to her.

"Yes, Miss Barker?"

It was nothing—but she just—well, she just wanted to thank him for having spoken to Lord Arthur. Of course, she knew that girls in her position must expect sometimes to come across men who would treat them—well, *he* knew—not quite respectfully. Still, that didn't make it the less unpleasant when it did happen, did it?

He agreed, gravely, that it did not. He was perfectly well aware—and so was Miss Barker—that in nine cases out of ten he would himself have acted just as Bulgie had done. For he was, I am sorry to say, a careless and casual youth. But having had that better moment—his average was one better to nine worse, roughly—he felt, before Miss Barker's pretty gratitude, extremely virtuous, and even contrived to look it. So virtuous that Miss Barker permitted herself the ghost of a smile and a little glance from under her eyelashes—just to restore the conversation to a more natural footing.

"I'm sure I looked a perfect fright,

too," she said with a frown. "Did I look very awful?"

That odd brightness reappeared in Mr. Arbuthnot's eyes.

"You looked—you looked—" He hesitated, at a loss for an adequate adjective.

"Nice?" she ventured, shyly.

He caught her hand and held it between his own, very tightly. She made no demur.

"Lovely," he said gallantly, his face very close to hers.

She withdrew her hand, laughed softly, flashed another glance from under those long silky lashes, and went on her way. He remained looking up after her until she disappeared with a little farewell wave of her hand.

Then he resumed his progress toward breakfast, inwardly determined to see a great deal more of Miss Barker in the immediate future.

X

THIS determination he proceeded to put into execution with such guileful industry during the three weeks that followed that he became, as Lady Marjory declared, an absolute nuisance.

Had Lady Marjory's respected mother been still alive, or had Lady Marjory's distinguished papa not been so preoccupied with the affairs of the nation and those of a certain charming Russian *danseuse*, it is possible that Mr. Arbuthnot's constant presence in the Langs' household might have received a less tolerant welcome. But both Lady Marjory and her brother were too amused to be censorious; though the former did upon one occasion speak to her maid a few explicit words of warning.

"I don't know what your views may be, Barker," she said kindly, pausing in the examination of a tiny red mark on her imperious little chin, "but I do know what Mr. Arbuthnot's views, are, very well indeed. So probably do you. His one real ambition is to break his neck—so he is not at all likely to trouble about other people's comfort—of

mind or body. He's a silly boy, but I have no intention of being nasty to him. In all probability he will be dead in a couple of months. You know that. These flying-men all end up quickly. If he chooses to come here and play hide-and-seek up and down the stairs after you—well, I shan't stop him. But I just thought I should warn you to be careful. Er—well, I don't mind telling you that he is one of the most—dangerous boys I have ever known. And I have known some. I don't want to lose you—as the song says—because you are a most excellent maid. But, of course—you quite understand—if anything unpleasant happens—well—I really should have to send you away. So I do hope you will be sensible, won't you?"

"I am quite capable of looking after myself, your ladyship," was Miss Barker's sedate reply to this little exordium. "Mr. Arbuthnot is a gentleman. I cannot help it if he admires me. I have never invited any kind of attention from him. But it is very kind of your ladyship to have spoken about the matter. I am always very careful with gentlemen."

"Right O!" said Lady Marjory blithely, and resumed the interrupted inspection of the little red mark.

"I think it's just a burn, Barker," she announced finally. "Probably cigarette ash."

She never made any further allusion to the matter.

It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that Miss Barker had not been quite candid in her apology. After that meeting on the stairs, it is true, she had neither invited nor openly encouraged Mr. Arbuthnot's admiration, but that was simply because she had perceived very quickly that its ardor increased in direct proportion to the coldness of her retreat.

He had made several attempts to induce her to meet him outside the house, but she had declined motor drives, visits to the theater, even palpably innocent afternoon teas, all with the same grave and rather reproachful smile. He sent

her his last slim volume of poems, bound in purple and silver, and wrote on the fly-leaf some curious verses which he entitled "A Song of Saintliness," and of which Miss Barker's best efforts, aided by several cigarettes and her little fire, could make nothing. They, however, confirmed a suspicion which she had begun to entertain lately—that he was addicted to the use of some drug. He also sent her a very handsome pendant, which she promptly returned, and a photograph of himself in his flying-kit, which she kept.

He had tried, too, on several occasions to kiss her, but those two pin-points of diamond light in his eyes had always given her timely warning.

Sometimes, as a result of these rebuffs, he was dejected, sometimes very nearly sulky, sometimes cynically unintelligible. Once he spoke of a premonition of death. On that occasion Miss Barker averted her face from him and, fearing that she suspected him of a pose, he changed the subject with a rather forced laugh.

The fact, however, that, since most of their conversation necessarily took place within possible—and probable—earshot of other servants, they nearly always spoke in tones little above a whisper, inevitably colored these brief meetings with a certain intimacy which grew rapidly more and more.

Miss Barker foresaw that she could not hope to hold utterly aloof for very much longer; and besides, it was probable that Mr. Arbuthnot would go out to France in a very few weeks.

There really was not much more time to lose.

Motor drives were dangerous things; cars driven by affectionate young men had an awkward trick of developing engine trouble a long way from home. Theaters? Theaters were crowded places—though, of course, one drove home in taxis from them. Afternoon tea in some quiet place with a good orchestra seemed more promising. But then, it was very difficult for her to get out in the afternoon, and besides, at any sacrifice, her next free afternoon

was already consecrated to Bertie.

Bertie was out of hospital now, and living with his married sister at Windsor, on furlough pending his discharge. Apparently the married sister was the only relative he owned who could afford to keep him; apparently also the married sister—who had five children—bore this distinction as her cross.

In a letter written in her hand, Bertie spoke of being a burden to her, and of something called Braille. His mind had, it seemed, recovered its clearness; he was longing to hear her voice, but it "killed him" to think that he would never see her again.

Miss Barker cried outright when she finished reading that letter.

XI

SHE had resolved to ask Lady Marjory's permission to go down to Windsor on the following Saturday afternoon, her intention being to return to London about six o'clock, pay a brief visit to her family, whose dwelling place lay conveniently near to Paddington Station, and get back to Curzon Street in time to dress her mistress for dinner. But, entirely through Lady Marjory's kindness, Saturday afternoon's programme was destined to undergo considerable modification.

"Of course, Barker," Lady Marjory said at once; "as a matter of fact, Captain Hepburn and his sister are driving me down to Plymouth on Saturday afternoon, and I shall probably stay over Sunday down there. I shan't want you—so that, if you like, you can stop the night with your mother. Get back here—say, midday Sunday. That is, of course, if you want to. Just do as you please."

Now Captain Hepburn was Lady Marjory's fiancé, and was, unless something unforeseen occurred, to enter into the bonds of matrimony with that engaging young person in less than a fortnight's time. Which brings us, naturally, to Lady Marjory's trousseau, and particularly to her "undies."

All London, or at any rate, that part

of it whose footsteps led them through Bond Street, had feasted its eyes upon those undies, admiring or condemning, smiling or tittering, speculating or merely wondering, according to individual points of view. The more frivolous portions of the press had been respectfully humorous with regard to their belaced and beribboned fluffiness, atoning by raptures of expert admiration in their fashion columns. A most respectable Cabinet Minister had been observed gazing abstractedly for a considerable time into the shop window in which they lay enshrined, and both he and they had found new fame in a very topical song in the *revue* of the moment.

What view Captain Hepburn entertained with regard to this intimate exhibition no one but Lady Marjory ever ventured to ascertain; for he was a large curt man, with a disconcerting stare. Lady Marjory's defence was characteristic.

"My dear boy, why worry? There's nothing in them. Let's go and inspect them. I haven't seen them yet."

So in Bond Street the undies remained until the Thursday before Lady Marjory's visit to Plymouth, on which day they were delivered at Curzon Street in several large boxes and carefully unpacked, listed and repacked by Miss Barker.

I am quite unable to tell you what Miss Barker thought about them. Indeed, I am inclined to believe that her thoughts were preoccupied with other things on that Thursday afternoon. For the morning's post had brought her a hastily scribbled note from Mr. Arbuthnot at Farnborough to tell her that he was to go to France at the close of the following week, and that he had applied for and received six days' leave. I fear that all that dainty costliness was very much wasted on Miss Barker that afternoon.

Her undertaking had suddenly appeared to her hopeless—silly. She felt that she had cheapened herself and sullied herself, for nothing; a reflection that is humiliating for a man, agonizing for a woman. It is possible that if she

had gone down to Windsor on the following Saturday as she had intended she would have abandoned her project altogether.

But, as it befell, she did not go to Windsor.

XII

IT WAS through no faltering in her loyalty to Bertie; rather it was that that loyalty revived her momentarily drooping spirit to a resolute and reckless determination to see the business through to an end, however forlorn and foolish the hope of success might seem.

On Friday afternoon, toward five o'clock, Mr. Arbuthnot, whose leave began on that day, called at Curzon Street, and having been informed by the elderly manservant who opened the door that there was no one at home, slipped half-a-sovereign into his hand and intimated that he desired a few minutes' conversation with Miss Barker.

The servant, with whom Miss Barker was a favourite, though Mr. Arbuthnot was none, went himself in search of her, with the result that she came tripping into the room where Mr. Arbuthnot sat before he had decided whether to smoke or not. He had come to propose that he should run her down next day in his car to Windsor—for she had told him of her projected visit. But to his surprised delight she informed him that she had now abandoned the idea of going to Windsor, and that she rather thought of "a theater or something" on Saturday night.

He was all eagerness at once. Why not dine somewhere with him and go on to a show afterward? He could run her out to Paddington, if she thought of sleeping out there.

She accepted tacitly the suggestion that he should accompany her to the theater. Dinner? Well—that would be "lovely"—but—dreadful but—she had no clothes fit to wear either in a restaurant or a theater.

He protested that clothes did not matter in the least; anything would do.

She made it very clear that anything would not do, and that if she went with him she went worthy of him.

He was shrewd enough to realise that the success of the evening would probably depend a great deal upon her feeling quite happy about her personal appearance, and offered to go straightaway in search of a gown and any other blessed thing that was necessary, if she would just jot down a few guiding directions on a slip of paper. He had the slip of paper already in his hand—but she shook her head.

"I couldn't do that," she said gently, but finally. "You mustn't suggest such a thing, ever again."

He controlled his impatience, and fidgeted about the room in the effort to devise some other plan. After a few minutes he turned to her abruptly.

"Couldn't you borrow one of Lady Marjory's gowns?" he asked. "You say she's going out of town tomorrow. She must have tons and tons of gowns."

Miss Barker looked at him in silence for a moment or two.

"I could do that," she said quietly at last.

"Do it then!" His face had recovered its cheerfulness.

"But—I should have to dress somewhere. I mean, I couldn't dress here. The—the servants would notice it."

Oh, that was easy. He could arrange that in a jiff. He spoke of a Mrs. Clifford who had a flat in Berners Street—a charming little woman—an old friend of his. She would be only too delighted to do anything for him. She was on the telephone. He rushed out to the study and returned some minutes later beaming. Quite all right. Mrs. Clifford's flat would be at Miss Barker's entire disposal tomorrow evening. Mrs. Clifford herself was going out of town, too, for the week-end.

He was all excitement, boyishly elated. His face was very attractive when it bore that happy, almost childish, smile. They arranged details. He would pick her up at Mrs. Clifford's flat

about seven or a little later. They would dine at—the Savoy?

The Arcadia?

Elmira's?

Elmira's was very smart.

Elmira's, then.

Then they would go—where?

She thought she would like to see "Tut-tut."

Ripping, "Tut-tut!"

"Tut-tut" it should be. They needn't stay to the very end.

Supper at the Solo Club—just to see it? Good. And then back to Berners Street to change. No, she did not think she would go out to Paddington.

She would ask her friend, the elderly man-servant, to wait up for her. That would be all right. But, of course, she must not be very late. Not later than one at the very outside.

Mr. Arbuthnot departed like a sunbeam. En route he presented the elderly man-servant with another half-sovereign.

Miss Barker devoted the rest of the afternoon to some trifling alterations in one of Lady Marjory's dinner-gowns. The work progressed slowly; with long intervals during which her hands lay idle in her lap and her eyes followed round and round the yellow border to one of the twelve blue lozenges that adorned her bedroom carpet. She felt that she had burned her boats.

XIII

AT HALF-PAST six precisely the following evening Miss Barker and a long, flat box alighted from a taxi in Berners Street and were admitted to Mrs. Clifford's flat by a respectable, civil, middle-aged maid, who, having indicated to madam the position of the bathroom, a large silver box of expensive looking cigarettes, and an ice-bucket containing two bottles, and having learned that madam required nothing further for the moment, discreetly withdrew.

The visitor, after a brief and approving inspection of her new surroundings, which were indeed extremely pretty and comfortable, unpacked the long flat

box, festooned various hooks, chairs and tables with its contents, closed the door between the one bedroom and the sitting-room adjoining and set about a careful and unhurried toilette.

Shortly before seven o'clock the maid tapped at the door.

"Mr. Arbuthnot is downstairs, madam. Shall I show him up?"

"Please," replied Miss Barker. "Say that I shall be ready in—well, better say a quarter of an hour."

Very well, madam. Madam required no assistance? Madam would be very much obliged for a little.

Mr. Arbuthnot took one of the bottles from the bucket and consumed the greater part of its contents and a cigarette from the silver box while he waited the quarter of an hour. He looked very smart and young and distinguished looking tonight. The day for him had dragged on feet of lead. He whistled a snatch of ragtime, lit another cigarette and stood with his hands in his pockets and his legs wide apart, examining a large photograph of a rather pretty woman which hung near the fireplace.

Another five minutes passed. He had just glanced at his watch when the door between the two rooms opened and Miss Barker appeared.

For an instant he stared, brows knit, almost incredulous.

"My God, child!" he said at last.
"You—"

He stopped, cleared his throat, and made a few involuntary steps toward her. Then, recovering his self-control, he laughed.

"You took my breath away for a moment," he said and held out both hands to her.

At that moment he was convinced that he had never seen any woman, any sort or kind of creature or thing, so beautiful as the girl who moved slowly across the room toward him and laid her hands for an instant in his. That was perhaps an exaggerated estimate, but beyond all yea or nay she was certainly very beautiful—youth and sweeteness incarnate. She blushed deliciously

as she read his open admiration and cast down eyes that reminded him somehow of violets with the dew on them.

The respectable maid, lingering apparently to restore the dishevelled bedroom to order, seemed unable to remove her gaze from Miss Barker's face, until a significant glance from Mr. Arbuthnot recalled her to discretion; she brought out a handsome wrap, laid it across the back of a chair and disappeared.

"Why do I take your breath away?" asked Miss Barker innocently, when they were alone. "May I have a cigarette?"

"You know very well why," he replied, reaching for the silver box.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Fine feathers make fine birds—even if the plumes are borrowed, I suppose. No. After all, I don't think that I want to smoke. Let's go to dinner. I am ravenously hungry."

He became almost at once aware that in some curious wise she had assumed with the gown a manner—even mannerisms—that corresponded so closely as to defy all scrutiny; and instinctively his whole mental attitude toward her altered in the passage of a few trivial commonplaces. It was, to her vigilant senses, significant that he ceased immediately to address her as "Miss Barker."

Indeed there is no doubt that for a considerable part of the evening Miss Barker failed utterly to feel quite sure that she recognised herself.

At Elmira's her progress, under the escort of the dignified head-waiter himself, to the table which had been reserved for them, created a little sensation. She recognised many of the faces which turned, politely curious, in her direction as she passed; Mr. Arbuthnot, radiant and manifestly proud of his charge, seemed to know everyone.

Dinner, begun thus auspiciously, was a triumphant success. The lights, the flowers, the carefully subdued music, the gaiety of the well-dressed, pleasant-looking people about her, stirred in her

usually sedate blood an unaccustomed excitement and frivolity.

What she ate she scarcely knew, nor did she in the least care; an imperceptible waiter poured something into her glass and she drank it and failed to notice that the glass was immediately refilled.

Mr. Arbuthnot's eyes never left her during the course of the meal; without effort he contrived to convey quite clearly that for him the room, the wide earth, and the whole universe, contained no one but their two selves. In this particular species of flattery he was at all times adept; this evening quite sincere.

They discussed quite a number of subjects with which lady's maids have no conventional concern. He discovered her frankly philistine in the things that didn't really matter; but in those that did she displayed a shrewd working philosophy which, being himself an entirely useless and unpractical person, he found—well, a great deal more profound and interesting, probably, than it would have appeared to him if he had had to extract a living from the application of its tenets to an indifferent and exacting world.

Half-way through dinner, judging perhaps that they had reached a stage of sufficient confidence, he asked her if she still thought of marrying the—she knew—the poor chap who—But she asked him, please, not to talk of that.

She noticed that he drank a good deal of wine. She hoped that he would not get drunk, and sent him a playful frown of reproval across the table when the waiter next refilled his glass.

"Don't be nervous," he laughed. "I've got a particularly hard head. That's the part I mean to fall on when I do come down."

"Oh, rubbish!" she said with unexpected acerbity. "I hate you to talk like that. What's the use of pretending that you want to get killed? You don't—honestly—do you?"

He selected a peach with care.

"I really don't care a hang whether

"I get killed or not," he said quietly. "It's not swank. Please don't think that. But, you see—well—I've had nearly everything that life can give me—that I want." He paused. "Except you," he added calmly.

"You think you want me?" she asked as calmly.

"I want you like the very devil," Mr. Arbuthnot responded—suddenly vehement.

Miss Barker lowered her eyes modestly. Both their voices sounded curiously muffled and distant; and she was conscious of a suppressed tension, whether in herself or in the atmosphere of the room, she could not decide. When they rose to go she felt just a little dizzy, and the lights seemed blurred. She attributed these phenomena quite honestly to the heat of the room; she had not the faintest idea that she had emptied her glass four times. Afterward she could not distinctly recall anything between that moment and the end of the first act of "Tut-tut."

In the taxi which bore them from Elmira's to the theater Mr. Arbuthnot kissed her.

XIV

At that time Bertie Wright was playing draughts with his eldest nephew, aged nine, named also Bertie, and regarded by himself, for the moment, as a miracle of patience, forbearance and generosity.

Bertie Senior was permitted to "feel" the board after every move that Bertie Junior made. This was a slow and exasperating process, and Bertie Junior, imperfectly consoled by a large and protruding piece of toffee, watched it with a gloomy and sleepy countenance. He had expressed his willingness to blindfold himself and beat Bertie Senior into a cocked-hat, but his mother, obscurely regarding this as a direct provocation to Providence, had at once imposed her veto upon this very sporting offer. She sat near them sewing, facing, across the hearth-rug, a small

anxious-looking man immersed in an evening paper, who was her husband.

After a little practice Bertie Senior thought he would be able to beat Bertie Junior at draughts.

XV

"TUT-TUT" that night pursued its usual light-hearted and irresponsible course, aided by three star principals, a bevy of very comely damsels, and—this was in November, 1914—a number of nimble and picturesque young men. If the house felt that perhaps it might possibly have seen less of the young men, it was doubtless consoled by the reflection that it could not well have seen more of the young women.

"What lovely frillies!" Mr. Arbuthnot murmured once to his companion.

"Don't be naughty," she whispered, coyly.

During the first interval, with her permission, he disappeared; when he returned, just after the curtain had risen, he seemed to have a difficulty in recognizing his seat. Miss Barker's dizziness had nearly passed off now; she realised that she must pull him together. Above all, Mr. Arbuthnot must not be allowed to stray away during the second interval; plainly he had been imbibing unwisely during the first.

Toward the end of the second act came the celebrated Flapper with her song—the song whose last verse had once dealt with a certain shop window in Bond Street and a Cabinet Minister. But now the shop window displayed other treasures, and the last verse was the verse that had been at last but one.

"Ah!" said Mr. Arbuthnot as the Flapper made her final tempestuous exit. "They've cut out poor old Marjory, then. *Sic transit.*"

What *sic transit* might have to do with Lady Marjory, Miss Barker had no idea. Privately she felt sure that Mr. Arbuthnot was now "tight."

"You've seen this thing before, haven't you?" she asked, drawing her wrap about her.

"Several times. Why? Would you—shall we cut it?"

She nodded.

"It's not very amusing. And I'm simply longing for a cigarette."

As they made their way out a young Flying Corps officer in uniform intercepted her escort.

"We go Friday, Arbuthnot—not Saturday. A wire came down this afternoon."

"Friday? Righto. Cheero!"

"Cheero!"

Miss Barker had caught the few hastily interchanged words. One day less! Her mouth tightened a little.

"Are you fearfully hungry?" she asked as they went down the stairs.

"Not in the least," replied her companion eagerly. "Go on. Please say exactly what you'd like to do."

She hesitated, then smiled shyly.

"You see—you—well, I couldn't help hearing what that boy said. We shan't see much more of one another, for a long time—perhaps—never. I—if you don't really want supper, I should much prefer to go back to Berners Street. It is nice and quiet there."

He stared at her searchingly for an instant, with those curious far-away eyes of his. But her expression remained tranquil and inscrutable. He suppressed an inclination to gather her in his arms and cover her face with kisses.

"Just whatever you wish," he said quietly.

And so she never saw what the Solo Club "was like."

XVI

AT Berners Street the respectable maid received them with a demure smile which for some reason seemed to irritate Mr. Arbuthnot. As he removed Miss Barker's wrap in the sitting-room with practised hands, he asked her if she wanted "that beastly woman" any more. If not, he would tell her to go off to bed. He couldn't stick her face, he explained.

Miss Barker hesitated.

"I suppose she wants to go to bed," she said slowly. "Perhaps she could help me out of my gown. I can't manage it very well by myself."

"I can unfasten hooks and eyes and things just as well as she can," he said.

"You?" Her eyes held his for a moment. "Very well. You may tell her to go to bed if you like."

When he returned to the sitting-room she had drawn an armchair near to the fire, lit a cigarette, and was sitting staring thoughtfully into the flames.

"A penny," he said laughingly.

She turned her face up to his for an instant.

"I was just wondering," she said slowly, "if you had enjoyed this evening in anything like the same way as I have enjoyed it."

Enjoyed it? Of course he had enjoyed it. Her eyes went back to the fire.

Of course he had enjoyed it. He stared at her profile with an odd little smile for a space, then crossed to the sideboard and took a decanter from a tantalus.

"Are you going to have another drink?" she asked over her shoulder.

"Well—that was my intention—since you ask."

"Don't," she urged, with a little grimace. "You know you've had quite enough to drink already. Not tonight—please."

He laughed shortly, put down the decanter and went back to her.

"I don't know why," he said slowly, "but at times you have a knack of making me feel an awful kid."

To this she made no rejoinder. There was a long silence during which he, too, drew a chair to the fire and seated himself so that he could best see her face.

"I suppose," she said at length, "you have known a great many girls—like this—I mean, done this sort of thing."

He smiled, embarrassed, uncertain.

"Oh, be straight. Don't be afraid of offending me or shocking me. Tell the truth."

"Well—not often, honestly. Sometimes, yes."

She looked him straight in the eyes.

"Why?" she asked quietly.

"Why? Oh, Lord! Why?"

"Yes, why? Why, for instance, did you ask me to go to the theater with you tonight? Why, exactly?"

"You *are* a funny child," he said evasively. "Great Caesar—I never have any reason for anything I do."

But she persisted.

"You like being with me?"

"I like being with you very much."

"You kiss all these girls—these others—of course?"

"If they allow me to."

"And if they don't?"

"If they don't"—he shrugged his shoulders—"I do without. But why in heaven's name look so serious. What on earth does it matter how many girls I kiss?"

"It does matter," she replied seriously. "I hate to think that I am just one of dozens—perhaps hundreds."

"Let's make it thousands while we're at it." He rose to his feet. "Look here, I must have that drink. Otherwise I shall begin to feel shy. I think it's most indequate of you to go probing into my past like that."

She frowned at him with mock severity; it was very difficult not to like him when he smiled that boyish smile of his.

"Oh, for goodness sake, have your drink, then, you silly donkey."

"That's better," he said cheerfully, and went across in two huge strides to the sideboard.

"What was that you said about Lady Marjory just before we left the theater?" she asked, when he returned to his place by the fire.

"Lady Marjory?"

"Something or other about cutting her out?"

"Oh! Well—they had Lady Marjory in that song the Flapper sings—you know—not Lady Marjory herself, but—well, parts of her."

"Parts of her?" Miss Barker was plainly quite at sea.

"Well, you know, they had part of her trousseau on show somewhere in Bond Street—at least so I understand. They actually had, hadn't they?"

Miss Barker nodded.

"Well, there was an allusion in the song to that. There—that's all. Now you have the full and true explanation of my poor little remark. Very smart, I believe—the things they had on show."

Miss Barker smiled faintly.

"Very." Then she added calmly: "I'm wearing some of them now."

"You are?"

"Yes. Every stitch I've got on belongs to Lady Marjory. I shall positively hate getting back into my own poor old rags. What time is it?"

Oh, it was early still; only half-past eleven. She had tons and tons of time. She had said one o'clock. But she yawned slightly, shook her head, smiled and rose.

"I really mustn't stay any longer," she said carelessly. "I've given you fair value for your money as it is."

It was as if she had struck him across the face. His smile vanished; he stood up, very straight and angry.

"You mean that?" he asked roughly. "That's your valuation of me, is it?"

She laughed scornfully.

"Of course it is, my dear boy. I'm not a fool."

As she turned away from him he caught her by the shoulders and swung her round so that she faced him again.

"If it comes to that," he said, hardly, "why did you come. Since we *have* got down to bed-rock."

"You are hurting me," she said coldly. "You hurt me once before—that night in the garden down at Framley."

"I'm sorry," he said, rather shame-facedly, releasing her. "But one moment you seem to lead me on—the next—"

"Lead you on? Isn't that a rather cowardly way of putting it? Do you really think you require any leading on, Mr. Arbuthnot? Now—for gracious sake, let us not squabble. There's no use in spoiling the evening. My

good times don't happen so often that I can afford to turn even one of them into—well—a haggling match."

"I have never haggled," he said with a little deprecating gesture of his cigarette. "I made you an offer—on your own terms—that night at Framley. You remember?"

"Oh, yes. I remember. I shall never forget."

"The offer is still open. And as I say—I never haggle."

She laughed bitterly.

"What a cold-blooded brute you are," she said contemptuously.

"Cold-blooded?" He made a swift movement towards her, but she retreated.

"No, no, no. We have had enough of that. Now unhook this gown for me like a good little boy. It is quite time that I became a lady's maid again. You have made that perfectly clear, haven't you?"

Now there is a beautiful tradition, doubtless, dear reader, firmly implanted in your patient breast, to the effect that the actions of the average young Englishmen of Mr. Arbuthnot's type are guided by a mind very simply designed, wholly analytical, and in a blunt, manly sort of way, rather stupid. So long, perhaps, as Mr. Arbuthnot is considered in clumps or herds, that tradition is worthy of some respect; but when one solitary specimen is separated from his fellows and given an opportunity of behaving foolishly in his own particular way, he very often displays quite perceptible symptoms of a regrettably untraditional intelligence.

Mr. Arbuthnot's five volumes of verse, I admit, were an aberration, and I am not sure that the poetry which he wrote was at all good poetry, though most of it was quite unintelligible. But quite apart from that particular weakness he was, as Miss Barker knew, anything but a simple creature of the matinée hero type. Reckless he undoubtedly was, and somewhat selfish. But before a weaker than he, one of the kindest, gentlest, and most self-effacing of gentlemen. I write these words

with deliberation; for this whole incident has an inevitable tendency to reveal him in his very worst light. To his every sense Miss Barker was temptation—and he was not, at this time, quite sober. But when she made that last cruel little speech to him, he held out his hand to her and said, very simply,

"I told you a year ago that I loved you. Every pretty woman, I suppose, looks prettier in well-made clothes. But you wore your own things that night at Framley. If I love you . . . what more can I do? I am not a fool, either, Miss Barker. I know you don't like me in the least . . . that way . . . but I should hate you to really dislike me, or bear me a grudge of any kind. Now, turn round and let me unfasten your gown."

She considered him attentively for a moment.

"Sometimes you are rather a dear," she said with softened eyes, "but . . . well . . . one can't change some things. You are . . . what you are . . . and I am . . . the maid of one of your friends."

"Very true. But to me, as it happens, the maid is a very much more important person than the mistress."

"For an occasion like this . . . perhaps . . . yes," she said with a shrug. "But you know very well you could never think of me as you do of her."

She waited. But he remained silent.

"You see. You are too honest . . . after all. Well . . . what does it matter?"

She dismissed the subject with a little gesture and presented her back to him. When, deftly, he had rendered the service demanded of him, she held up her face to him with a smile.

"Good boy. You may kiss me, once, if you like . . . as a special reward."

But his gaiety had suddenly vanished. He laughed shortly and walked away from her.

"Oh, very well," she said, defiantly, and disappeared into the next room, the door of which closed with decision behind her.

XVII

By this time you will have concluded, if you have read so far, that Miss Barker was a designing minx. If you persist a little farther, you will almost certainly find some more severe epithet necessary. But you are asked to admit, however grudgingly, that Mr. Arbuthnot had been handled with considerable skill. Miss Barker at all events thought so. She was perfectly aware that the chances were still against her; but her instinct told her more surely than any reasoning could, that with one last assault victory might still be snatched from the grinning lips of defeat.

She took off Lady Marjory's gown and put it away carefully in the long flat box; and attired now in other garments of Lady Marjory's she seated herself on the side of the bed, and fixed her eyes meditatively on the door which separated her from Mr. Arbuthnot.

There was the clink of glass and the swish of a siphon. Then she heard him moving about the room for a little while. Again the clink of glass and more restlessly pacing footsteps. And finally the door opened and Mr. Arbuthnot looked into the room.

Young men—some of them at least—are young men. I spare you the details. Immediately upon his entry Miss Barker had snatched up Lady Marjory's wrap and eclipsed beneath it the charms upon which Mr. Arbuthnot had no right to gaze. He talked very wildly. That last whisky and soda had certainly been one too many. He laughed at last rather recklessly.

"What the devil do you want?" he asked. "Do you want me to marry you?"

His blinking eyes strove to meet her merciless stare.

"Go on. Answer me. Do you want me to marry you?" He paused. "Damn it! I'm fonder of you than any woman I know. Will you marry me?"

Still she made no reply. He raised his voice.

"Will you marry me? Answer me.

You needn't be afraid. You'll be a widow before Christmas. Will you marry me. I'm notabadsorochap."

His eyes closed for an instant; the last words were a blur.

"Very well," she said quietly. "I will marry you."

But she shivered when he kissed her.

"Go and wait in the other room," she said, "I shan't be long."

He drifted out, submissively, and subsiding into the first chair, fell sound asleep.

He fell asleep again in the taxi. Miss Barker alighted at the corner of Curzon Street, and paid the driver liberally from her own privy purse. Fortunately she recalled that Mr. Arbuthnot was staying with his sister.

"Take this gentleman to Grosvenor Street," she said, avoiding the man's curious eyes. "I don't know the number—but it's the fourth house on the right as you enter the street going from here."

The friendly old man-servant let her in. He hoped she had had a pleasant evening. Very, thank you . . . and it was *very* good of him to wait up for her.

Her last conscious thought before she fell asleep would have expressed itself in these words:

"How will he try to get out of it?"

XVIII

BUT in this doubt she was unjust. For Mr. Arbuthnot's word was his bond; and whatever regrets may have attended his awakening next morning no trace of them was visible when he appeared after lunch at Curzon Street.

He kissed her gravely when he found her, arranging some chrysanthemums in a little room which Lady Marjory reserved for a few chosen intimates. Neither of them displayed the least emotion. After a first questioning glance Miss Barker felt a little ashamed of herself.

He had apparently thought out all details beforehand. The time was very short; he proposed to see Lady Mar-

jory there and then. Miss Barker was grateful to him for giving her an opportunity to decline being present at that interview.

Lady Marjory listened in amazement.

"Well, Jacko," the nickname dated from their childhood, "I always knew you were mad, but this. . . . Great Scott! Just listen. What do you think is going to happen when I meet your wife? Just think."

But he only smiled irritably.

Miss Barker returned to her mother's house that evening. Mr. Arbuthnot's Monday included a rather grim interview with the family solicitors, and a fevered inspection of various flats, furnished and unfurnished. They were married on Tuesday by special licence. On Thursday afternoon their honeymoon ended on the platform at Waterloo.

Mrs. Arbuthnot returned to her temporary home—hastily furnished, lonely, and somehow sinister. She stood in the middle of her bedroom and looked about her apprehensively.

"Ugh!" she said aloud, and shivered in her new furs.

XIX

VERY quickly, however, she set her new life in order. She found another flat, where she gradually surrounded herself with a comfort, far removed from extravagance, yet costly enough to cause her occasional twinges of conscience. She had at her disposal what appeared to her an enormous amount of money, and she had acquired tastes in furniture and household equipment, the satisfaction of which afforded her an almost sensuous pleasure.

"When you come home on leave," she wrote to her husband, in one of her first letters, *"I know you will scold me for spending so much money but you will forgive me when you see your own room I have two maids as well as the cook. Is that dreadfully extravagant but you can't get a really good parlour-maid to do housemaid's work. I am sending you, etc., etc."*

Punctuation and capitals, save for the first personal pronoun, her letters revealed no trace of; but their recipient apparently found them none the less desirable, for he complained bitterly when one week brought him but one missive instead of the usual two. As time went on his own letters to her grew more and more intimate. He said next to nothing of his own life out there, but she gathered that he was fairly happy and contented. She knitted woolen things with her own clever hands and sent them to him swathed round boxes of his favourite cigarettes. As she never went anywhere at night this beguiled the weariness of her lonely evenings.

To her bargain she was rigidly faithful. Once a week she went down to Windsor and spent an hour or so with Bertie. She went as Miss Barker. It was now her hope that he would never know; there was no reason why he ever should, if luck favoured her. At first Bertie's sister invariably remained in the room; she considered Miss Barker altogether too "dressy" for her "station"; but having observed for a while the visitor's face when it was turned to her brother's, she fell into the habit of "doing a little shopping" whenever Miss Barker called, stipulating only that her guest should "keep an eye to" the children.

They were very happy, left to themselves, but beyond playing sometimes with his left hand, she behaved, with difficulty, blamelessly. He was to get an artificial arm, some time soon. Save for a big scar on his forehead, almost hidden by his hair, and save that he was now a little paler than had been his wont, Bertie's face bore no trace of that big shell that had caught him on the Charleroi road. Sometimes she almost persuaded herself that he could see her.

His future was still entirely vague. He really hadn't the faintest glimmer of an idea what was going to become of him. He had always been fond of music; now it was with him a passion; and for the sake of the music she sometimes

took him to a picture house, where they sat in the extreme back row. When the house laughed at Charlie Chaplin's adventures or some other such absurdity the expression on his face made her long to bury his head against her breast and cry into his hair. But a bargain was a bargain. She kept hers.

Christmas came and went. Day after day, week after week, month after month, the slow desperate struggle out there chronicled itself each morning in the brief, monotonous communiqué of the newspapers. Spring came, and waxed to Summer. Mrs. Arbuthnot bought a small two-seater, which she drove herself and in which she occasionally took Bertie for drives. The car, she informed his sister, was Lady Marjory's. June came, an English June, of glorious, blazing days, and warm, delicious nights.

XX

IN the front line trenches opposite Obersill, towards six o'clock on the afternoon of one of those blazing June days, everything was going on, as it had gone on all day, precisely as usual. Obersill is not to be found on any map, but that is what Private Judd called the bit of rising ground behind Fritz's lines, and that is what I am going to call it. Private Judd is selected simply because he was the only man in his platoon who was doing nothing in particular at the moment; the reason being that about half an hour previously he had nearly severed one of his thumbs with a tin-opener.

At four o'clock Fritz had concluded his afternoon strafe; at five three of the batteries at Private Judd's rear began theirs. No one paid any attention to these proceedings, which were monotonously familiar. Private Judd alone sometimes raised incurious eyes to watch for a moment or two the plane which was directing the operations of the three batteries. What they were firing at he neither knew nor cared; it had nothing to do with him. His mind was wholly occupied with speculation as

to the arrival of the post; he expected a parcel.

The plane alternately advanced and retreated; as soon as it crossed a certain line, Fritz opened fire on it. Fritz's aim was, as usual just in that part of the line, poor. The plane pursued its course with methodical deliberation. Private Judd had never yet seen one of those little puffs of snowy white smoke break out in the sky anywhere near enough to a plane to arouse his real interest. He was inclined to think that aeroplanes never did get hit. He decided to have another look at his thumb.

About him the rest of the platoon were occupied with the repair of the parados. Occasionally one paused to wipe his face in his rolled up shirt sleeve, looked at nothing for a little while, then resumed his work.

Just as he was about to finish unrolling his bandage, Private Judd looked casually skywards again. He forgot about his thumb.

"Blimey!" he said, interested at last. He followed the headlong dive of the plane until the top sandbags of the parados cut it abruptly from his view.

So passed Mr. Arbuthnot. God rest the souls of all such gallant knights as he!

XXI

FOR over two months Mrs. Arbuthnot paid no visit to Windsor; doubtless she had excellent reasons; she usually had. It was in the early days of September that she next saw Bertie, and told him as much of the truth as she judged expedient. She had married an officer—a Mr. Arbuthnot. She had not loved him—but he was very kind and good to her. He had been killed in France. He had left her fairly well off. She hated herself for having deceived Bertie. She knew he would never forgive her. But she had acted for the best.

Bertie listened with a face of stone. When she had finished he got up and groped his way out of the room.

She did not see him again until the following February, though she had many interviews during the intervening months with his sister, who took an eminently practical view of the situation. In February Bertie was still very difficult, but not impossible. In March he defined their position—with Mrs. Arbuthnot's help; they were to be

friends—friends of a very special sort, though how anyone could regard him as anything but an infernal nuisance he didn't know. Mrs. Arbuthnot smiled. She had some perhaps justifiable confidence in her own resources.

Bertie has a quite wonderful right arm now.

And Mrs. Bertie has him.



A SPRING SONG OF THE CITY

By John Hanlon

WHAT meaning has your spring song
To me who never knew
How tiny Stars of Bethlehem
Bend low their heads of blue;

Who never saw a wee egg
Speckled with russet brown,
Or heard the new lambs bleating
On the road to Milford town?

But sing of city snow drifts
That dwindle in the sun.
Sing of soft clouds in the west,
From an angel's mantle spun.

Sing of the gay red tulips
That dance in the public square.
Sing of the kites that are soaring
From vacant lots everywhere.

Sing of the scores of children
Who fill the streets with cries.
Sing of the light of gladness
In a shop girl's tired eyes.

These things shall be my spring song,
My song of songs today;
For even the grim old city
Responds to the call of May.



THE LAST ARISTOCRAT

By Charles Divine

THE figure of an old man moved slowly toward a brownstone house standing lonesomely in a section of Brooklyn once known as exclusive and containing the former dwellings of many old families. With an almost imperceptible limp the old man mounted the steps, aiding himself in his climb with a heavy cane. The big door swung open magically before him. As he stood in the vestibule and removed his hat with a careful dignity, the light of the big lamp hanging from the ceiling streamed over his fine old face and white hair.

"G' ev'nin', Colonel," said a negro servant, who had opened the door and now took the old man's hat.

"Good evening, Joseph. How's the club to-night? Quiet?"

Joseph suppressed a smile and replied with studied gravity:

"Yas, suh, it suttin'lly is quiet, suh. You're lookin' a little peaked, Colonel."

"I am tired, Joseph." He reached for a silk handkerchief in the folds of his long coat and brushed it across his wrinkled brow. "I'm getting old, Joseph. Not much strength left—not much."

He sighed wearily and moved into the adjoining reading room, where he sank into a plush armchair and took up a magazine from the table.

The only sound that broke the stillness hovering through the upper floors of the clubhouse was the crisp crackle of the pages of the magazine as Colonel Asa Grayson turned them falteringly.

Below stairs Joseph had gone to tell the four other servants that the Colonel had arrived, and the five of them shook their heads as usual, unable to under-

stand their odd employment. They constituted the entire staff of servants in a club in which there was but one surviving member, Colonel Grayson, and almost their only occupation was dusting the big house, lighting the lights at dusk, fraternizing in the kitchen with the chef, or else picking idly at a banjo. The chef's single task for weeks had been the preparation of a light lunch every night at nine-thirty for the Colonel. Before the other members of the club had died the chef had had plenty to do. Now they talked in whispers in the kitchen as if fearful of disturbing the old man above them.

Suddenly Joseph raised his head, alert, caught by the sound of a falling object on the first floor. He started for the hall with swift, stealthy strides, and upstairs in the billiard room he found Colonel Grayson leaning against the side of the billiard table.

"I thought I heard a noise, suh."

"Yes, Joseph," said the Colonel weakly. "It was the cue. I dropped it. I had a dizzy spell, I guess."

"Jes' lay a hand on Joseph's shoulder, suh, an' he'll help you ovah to that there big chair in the other room."

Half-supported by the negro, the Colonel reached the lounging room and let himself down into a chair. "Not much strength left, Joseph—not much."

"Don't you go takin' on lak that, suh," protested Joseph, who knew how to inspirit him. "Gotta remember to-night's the monthly meetin', Colonel."

"By George! so it is." The Colonel's faded gray eyes lit up and he seemed to gain a sudden energy. "You are right, Joseph. I am as sound as a trivet after

all. Move the table over here and bring me the books."

"Yas, suh. I wuz jes' a-gettin' 'em, suh."

The Colonel drew out his gold-rimmed spectacles and a gold-encased lead pencil, while Joseph placed before him the books of the club—the secretary's book, the treasurer's, the membership committee's report, and a sheaf of random papers. Colonel Grayson now held all of the offices of the club and was the chairman of every committee and its every member.

Joseph withdrew and the Colonel was alone. He rapped on the table with a small ebony gavel.

"The meeting will please come to order," he announced. "Secretary read the minutes of the last meeting! Does somebody propose that the reading of the minutes be dispensed with? All in favor signify by the usual sign. Carried! Reading of the minutes dispensed with. Are there any committees to report?"

The Colonel's gentle speech came to an end as he took up one of the books before him. This was a painful task for him, this reading of the membership committee's report. There were fully two hundred names on the list of proposed members, but none of them had ever been elected. The Colonel's fellow members, before they all died, had never deemed these names worthy of election, and month after month the Colonel too had refused them the honor of membership. They were middle-class names and middle-class men, or *nouveau riche*, or startlingly prominent, with no ancient lineage, no intellectual heritage, no family history to open carelessly at any page and be proud of.

"I have the pleasure, Mr. President," said the Colonel slowly, as if addressing the meeting from the floor, "to present the names of proposed members. Michael Dillon"—the Colonel paused a moment and then added the terse commentary—"keeps a meat market! Henry Schneider . . . butter and eggs. Huh! Isadore Einstein, clothing, humph!"

His eye ran on down the list, and he

rested his chin in his hand, dejectedly. It was his poignant fear that he should pass away without having elected any new members to perpetuate the club and maintain its traditions of aristocracy.

And yet, how could he make a scholar of a butcher, or a gentleman of a dealer in second-hand clothes?

He realized that he was getting old and out of touch with people; those he could have vouched for had either died or moved away. "Berger, salesman! . . . Grovisky, moving pictures . . . huh!"

"Mr. President," he called in a high voice, "I move that no action be taken on these names at this meeting—or any subsequent meeting!"

As presiding officer he swept the room in an encircling gaze.

"Do I hear a dissenting voice? No. The recommendation is adopted!"

And he closed the book with a slam. He passed on to the treasurer's report and stated that there were several thousand dollars in the treasury, and then, after treating other routine matters, he declared the meeting adjourned.

"Joseph!" he called. The negro stepped into the room simultaneously. "I am ready for my lunch now."

"Yes, suh. I s'pect frum whut I heared that cook's gettin' it ready for you this minute, suh."

Colonel Grayson leaned back in his chair, resting from his duties. He felt a touch of the fresh night air on his cheek, and looked up toward the door in the hall.

For a moment he held his breath and rubbed the back of his hand across his eyes, seeking to dissipate the extraordinary vision of a young woman standing in the glow of the big lamp. But it wasn't a vision; it was reality.

She stepped into the room and then saw him and stopped, surprised.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and added in a soft voice, penitently: "Now you've caught me."

It was unlike the Colonel to frown, so he didn't, but he looked amazed at this charming intrusion.

The girl blushed.

"I—I only wanted to shock Mrs. Perkins." She smiled. "But I see I've shocked you, too."

"Who is Mrs. Perkins?" asked the Colonel.

"I'm visiting at her house. I didn't mean to intrude on *anybody*, honestly I didn't. I was just kind of curious, you know, and I thought it would be a lark to adventure in a deserted house ablaze with lights. They told me nobody came here any more. Are you angry?"

"Not at all," said the Colonel, rising with a bow. "And it isn't deserted any more," he added significantly. "Won't you sit down? You're from the South, aren't you?"

"Thank you," she said, taking a chair opposite him. "Uh-huh! Tennessee. . . . Nashville, to be precise—but I'm not very precise, am I?"

"You're very kind to pay an old man a visit," said the Colonel. "I used to know the Nixons in Nashville."

"The Jerry Nixons?"

He nodded.

"They're my cousins," she said. "I'm of the Warren branch of the family."

The Colonel nodded his head. "They're the right sort."

"You bet they are!" she cried, with a blaze of loyalty—"I mean," she moderated her impetuosity, "I mean they are the right sort—without the *bet*."

Then she laughed, and the Colonel laughed with her. He leaned forward eagerly, with a tear glistening in a seam of his cheek, and rebuked her.

"That's the first time, young lady, I recall having laughed in three months!"

Joseph appeared in the doorway carrying the Colonel's lunch on a tray. He caught sight of the Colonel's guest and stopped short with a nervous jerking that put the plates and glasses at an imminent peril of tumbling. He was unable to recover immediately from his spasm of quivering.

"Stop fidgetting so!" commanded the Colonel brusquely. "You act like an old man. And Joseph! Why did you tell me this was the night of the monthly meeting? It was a reprehensible mistake."

Joseph looked worried and began to stammer.

"Ah—ah—suh, I *thought* it wuz the right night, suh."

"Well, you were wrong. Put the tray down and tell the boys to start some music in the assembly hall. It's ladies' night!"

"Yas, suh," responded Joseph with exceptional alacrity, "indeed yas, suh. There ain't nothin' goin' detain me, suh!" He fled through the door like a shadow.

The Colonel turned to the young woman.

"Joseph has been with the club a long time," he explained. "He's getting old and feeble now. His memory is failing. You must excuse him."

She nodded. She asked the Colonel if he was all alone in this big house; slowly he inclined his head, and with an undercurrent of sadness which she could sense, he told her of the club and its singular membership, and of the unattainable happiness it would bring him to know that the club wouldn't perish with him.

"It's the ambition of an old man's life. We all have dreams, don't we? Maybe you have one, too."

To this she started to reply, but she stopped abruptly and tears came into her eyes.

She dropped down on one knee beside the Colonel and told him how she had been married six months ago, and how her young husband had been stricken with pneumonia and died three weeks after their honeymoon. Since then her life had been a constant effort to be brave.

The Colonel consoled her after the manner of young gallants with young widows—especially pretty young widows.

"Everybody tries to make me laugh," she answered him, "and be happy—to make me forget my sorrow—" She sat up suddenly and clapped her hands together joyously. "What's that? I do believe it's banjo music!" She listened alert to the strains that floated down from the floor above.

"It is banjo music," the Colonel assured her.

"It's wonderful!" she exclaimed, her eyes agleam. "And they're darkies. I know. Nobody else can rag like that. I think it's absolutely fascinating."

"Take my arm," said the Colonel, rising. "We always have dancing on ladies' night."

He led her into the corridor and up the staircase in a grand manner, and she mounted the steps beside him like a true Southern belle. At the door to the assembly hall they came upon the three players. Two of them who had been accustomed to while away their idle moments plucking at their banjos, had now found a professional test of their skill which they were meeting with enthusiasm, and the third was thumping an old piano.

Just inside the door the Colonel made an elaborate bow.

"Would you mind if we sat this one out?"

"Not at all," she replied with a smile.

So he led her down the stairs again to the lounging room. The climbing of the stairs and his unusual efforts to entertain her had proved a trial to his strength. He lay back in a chair, white and breathless.

"I am an old man after all." His voice was scarcely audible. "As soon as I—I catch my breath I'll show you a photograph album of the club." He started to rise but fell back with a little cry and pressed one hand to his breast.

She leaned over him, perturbed.

"Not much strength left—" he whispered—"not much. I'm getting near the—the end of the rope."

She called to Joseph, and together they tried to minister to him.

"You mustn't take on lak this, suh," begged Joseph. "Remember the annyvers'ry's comin' next month, suh."

But for once Joseph's method of arousing him failed.

"You—you'll have to close up the club, Joseph. I can't last much longer. Listen, Joseph! Come closer. In the brown box in the desk, next to the min-

ute book, there is a history of the founding of the club. I want the newspapers to have it right. And there—there's also a little obituary notice about me—a sketch of my life, you know."

The girl pressed a glass of water to his lips. He took a sip of it.

"I wish—"he began and broke off abruptly.

"Yes?" she asked anxiously. "What is it? I'll get it for you."

A faint smile crossed his face.

"No," he murmured. "You can't."

"But what is it? Maybe I can."

"No." He shook his head sadly. "The club will have to end with me. But I wish. . . ."

"Please tell me," she begged, feeling the tears come into her eyes.

"It's too late, my dear."

"Is it much too late?"

"Well, it's"—the Colonel hesitated—"how old are you?"

"Twenty."

"Yes," sighed the Colonel, "it's twenty years too late, but I wish—"

"What?" she demanded.

"That you might have been a boy!" There was an intense wistfulness in his face as he put out his hand and found hers, and raised her fingers to his lips.

Suddenly she leaned over him and, putting her lips close to his ear, she whispered a vibrant message that made her own cheeks flush as she said it.

The Colonel looked up eagerly, his eyes ablaze.

"That's great!" he cried, taking her hand. "And the money in the treasury shall be used to educate him and bring him up in a fashion befitting a future member of this club. Joseph!" There was a ring of triumph in his voice, "Joseph! I'm all right now. Put down that foolish glass of water, and if you aren't too feeble, you run upstairs and tell that orchestra of yours to play 'Dixie'!"

With a look of ineffable peace and happiness the Colonel sank back in his chair and fell asleep.

"But"—faltered the young woman with a quick, mischievous laugh—"but what if it should be a girl?"

THE SINS OF THE FOUR HUNDRED

By _____

III

THE MARRIED PEOPLE

I

WHY is it so many young married people in Society go on the rocks?

That is a question one hears tossed about everywhere, but a question as yet not satisfactorily dealt with. I have given the matter much thought and have a variety of impressions, but for the most part they are too chaotic, too wrapt up with my personal experience and emotions to help at all in the producing of order.

But I want to give you some of those impressions just the same, to point out a few causes that bring about the domestic tragedies in which our newspapers love to revel, and to show that the people with millions are as much slaves to exterior circumstance as the poverty-stricken masses of the slums.

In the first place, a marriage in the wealthy classes is usually the result of abnormal conditions, conditions apt to force an emotion that otherwise might not come into existence at all. Given any young man and woman and bring them together night after night at the big affairs of the season, where there is an unlimited supply of champagne and the most emotional of modern music, and very soon, with brain afume and syncopation in the blood, they begin to see each other through a wondrous rosy haze.

That haze usually lasts long enough to carry them to the altar. A marriage of emotions is the result, and when the first passion is over, there is no good

foundation of mental affinity and companionship to fall back upon. There is nothing to take them through the long years that stretch ahead, and so the divorce court is welcomed as the only happy solution.

And then, again, the young people of Society have too much time on their hands. As they grow older they resort to fads and fancies by means of which they manage to get through each day with a fair show of ease. But at first, in the early twenties, they are like so many rudderless crafts, and it is no wonder at all so many come to grief.

A great many of the young men have no business responsibilities; the younger women are usually quite free from the trammels of housekeeping. Hence, a young married couple have twenty-four hours each day in which to exploit one another. The result is they are very apt to consume their mutual affections at a fearfully prodigal rate, and to exhaust each other's possibilities in no time.

I often wonder how many married couples in moderate circumstances, who see one another but a few hours each day, could stand proof against this fearful drain of continual companionship. How many who decry divorce now would not, under the same conditions attendant upon the wealthy, resort to the law as a blessed relief from martyrdom? In these days of belief in the individual, each has a right to cry out for room to develop his own individuality. But to develop individuality is an utter impossibility in the life lived by the

newly married couple of Society. Hence, disaster! For the Nietzsche theory has got us all today, and we fight for that to the exclusion of everything else.

I said a little while ago that the divorce court was the solution, usually, of domestic difficulties among the wealthy. That was true a few years ago, but I think today there is an increasing tendency to ignore the law and to settle things out of court.

For instance, a man and woman tire of each other and then come to some sort of agreement, according to which each is to go his own way and to allow the other to do likewise. There are many instances in Society of just this sort of thing, where young married people are openly and shamelessly carrying on affairs. The husband follows his vagaries, the wife hers, and there is perfect harmony and understanding at home. Often little foursomes are arranged, too, where if the eventual pairing off is not strictly according to the law, it is at least to the contentment and satisfaction of all concerned.

But there are far more sordid relations existing on the edges of Society than this. There is always a certain excuse where fancy or desire dictates. But in a great many instances it is entirely a matter of hard dollar diplomacy, where the husband connives with his wife to get money out of an admirer or the wife assists the husband in an affair likely to bring substantial results to the household. This sort of thing is likely to exist among the older people, who have not a shred of an illusion left in regard to themselves nor anybody else.

I know one man of the brutish sporting type who boasted quite openly of just such an arrangement. His finances were in desperate condition and he was on the verge of bankruptcy. By a diabolical piece of luck he happened to take the fancy of a young married woman of unlimited wealth. She was pretty and fragile looking, the last in the world one would suspect capable of such an attraction. The man, with the

help of his wife, quite mercilessly exploited the little lady, and he treated her like a dog all the while he was taking her money. Then her husband, also a worthless spendthrift, used his knowledge of her affair to his own advantage, and he, too, made the most of the opportunity to draw more heavily than usual upon her resources.

Husband and lover made common cause and had many a good laugh at the expense of the lady. I have seen her sitting listlessly in the front of a horse show box, unconscious of the fact that she was the butt of much unseemly mirth being carried on about her by her husband, lover, and lover's wife. It was a pitiful situation. She must finally have recognized something of their attitude toward her, but so far gone was she in her infatuation that I think she did not care.

Then there are many instances where men connive with their wives in the enmeshing of a wealthy admirer. And many families with this sort of illicit backing have succeeded in breaking into New York's smart set! One can understand perhaps an ignoring of this sort of thing when it exists among one's friends, but why under the heavens stand for it in a climber? And that is exactly what New York Society has done in two very notorious instances within the last few years.

II

IN CASES where money is no object the married people of Society follow their desires at random. The women usually keep to the men of their own set, or else exploit the sycophant. Society has known an instance, however, of a conspicuous woman marrying her coachman, and the elopement of another well-known matron with a Hungarian musician also created a slight furor some years ago. But for the most part, as I have said, the Society women keep to the men of their own class. Usually an admirer lasts a season, although there are instances where such affairs have lasted three or four.

The men of Society, however, do not confine their admiration to the women of their own set. There is a growing tendency to go quite outside the inner circle.

I remember hearing a Frenchman say once, "When a man has a mistress he has an outlet for the worst that is in him. It results eventually in the purification of the home."

Remarkable idea, but, of course, the Frenchman wasn't serious. No more the American man when he pleads some such elaborate reason for his support of a double *ménage*.

The American man wants a life of variety; that is the point of the whole thing. His wife is no doubt typical of all the women of his own set whom he encounters daily, so naturally he looks elsewhere for a change. Broadway naturally offers the greatest opportunities, for it is there one has a chance to look and choose.

The stage provides perhaps fifty per cent of the women supported by men of wealth. This is no reflection upon the theatrical profession. If women in other walks of life were carefully lined up for inspection night after night, there would then no doubt be a more even division of the spoils. The women of the stage would then have to look out for their laurels, perhaps!

The mistress of yesterday, who kept entirely within doors during the day-time and blossomed forth only in the electric light, is a thing of the past. *Bon camaraderie* weighs today.

Take your restaurants in the suburbs of New York in the summer. You find gathered at any of them the jolliest of parties. Women protected by wealthy men run their own motors, have their own yachts, play polo and all in all make for most excellent company. They are more and more playing the part the wife should play. Then in what lies the advantage of the mistress? In the fact that she can be readily changed, that she can be doffed as one doffs a coat, discarded as one discards a motor that no longer quite suits. And from the very fact of what

she is, she is obliged to submit. How gracefully she does it is the measure of her success.

The older man is apt to take a more sordid viewpoint. Women who have been *demi mondains*, even West Indian women, are protected by such men, and one man occasionally will have three and four establishments. Upon the death of a well-known millionaire of middle age some years ago it was divulged that no less than six establishments were being kept up at his expense.

But how is it that any man of intelligence can reach such depths of degradation? Simply because from childhood physical ease is so carefully fostered among the rich. What he has to eat and drink means so much to the wealthy boy of fourteen that long before he goes to college the epicure in him is fully developed. So with his other desires. The youth with a generous bank account is possessed of more daring than the ordinary youth. Even in his college days he resorts to debauchery, confident that the power of his money will carry him through whatever emergency arises. He drinks to excess usually when young, having the desire and the money to enable him to satisfy that desire. He sees no reason in the world why he should cut himself off from anything that ministers to his entertainment. And so on, until as he grows older, unless a certain will-power be brought to curb him in his diverse gratifications, he becomes hopelessly dissolute.

But the general routine of Society life is not one to offer much opportunity to any one in the line of self-discipline. These people of money, by reason of that very money, rise superior to all laws and necessities that bind the ordinary mortal. What matters the awkward schedule of the railroads or the uncomfortable boating facilities if private cars, yachts and motors of every description are ready to hand? What matters the speed limit or the gaming law since money can overcome them? What is distance to these peo-

ple? Money ensures luxurious transportation everywhere, so the world is their playground. Small wonder these children of fortune should be spoiled and end by making a fetish of their own little selves. The best of everything in the world is theirs. Art, music, literature! There is no door that is closed to them; nothing that they cannot make their own if fancy prompts. They can run down a goyer or capture a Fragonard over night, and then pass on to something else.

III

BUT the variety of possibilities that these people have seems to work to their confusion in the end. For the spirit of unrest possesses them utterly. I heard a minister, a man fairly prominent in New York Society, by the way, preach on the unrest among the wealthy classes.

"There's pathos in the bread-line, but there's more pathos in the automobile line." His text went something like that.

A fever of desire for something new drives these people on from day to day, always on and on, and always unsatisfied. They enter eagerly into athletics, and go the rounds—tennis, swimming, polo, golf, riding, yachting. They gamble and leave off bridge for poker, and poker for billiards, and then go back to bridge again. They attend the horse shows and dog shows and races and aviation meets. In the winter they follow the opera and theaters or duplicate their summer round at a winter resort. And always one big affair after another, each outdoing the one before in lavish expenditure and the search after novelty.

And always the lights and music, the wonderful clothes, the excess of champagne—is it a wonder these people know nothing of discipline and self-denial? White balls, gold balls, Japanese balls, anything to flaunt a certain amount of money and to outdo a rival hostess. And always striving!

Look at the absurd fads and fancies

of Society. Look at the women with their dogs or their causes. A Pekinese or a working girls' home! A Russian artist picked up from the steerage on the last trip over or a soup kitchen! I recognize fully the fact that there is a great deal of good done along charitable lines by many Society women, and I am willing to give them due credit for their efforts, but there are also many women who take up causes from sheer restlessness and a desire for something different. Each cause has its little day and then is passed by for something of newer flavor.

And look at the men with their immense breeding farms, their aviation fields, their hunting lodges. It is more than pure love of sport that actuates such things; it is that these restless spirits must have an outlet for the fever heat of their vitality. We find the yachtsman turned hunter, or the motor enthusiast the horse show exhibitor. It doesn't matter what particular line is followed; all that is necessary is to follow something for awhile and then go on to something else. One quick round after another of pleasure, idle pursuit and amours, and so Society goes!

Much has been written as to the stupendous amount of money spent on trifles and entertainment by the wealthy. This is quite true, but I do not join with the people who condemn the rich for this, for lavish expenditure puts money most freely into circulation and a legion of artisans manage to make a most comfortable living as a result. The entertainments and balls cost thousands of dollars, sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars, but if the caterers and modistes and florists, etc., thrive on such affairs, in what lies the wrong?

No, I shall not criticize the wealthy in the spending of their money. I shall criticize them, however, for the fact that they do not pay their bills. In New York they are obliged to meet their obligations more readily than in other places. It is at the small seaside or mountain resorts that the tradespeople suffer. In the first place, there

are the people who, though they have money, are too negligent to look over their bills and too lazy to write out their checks. A great many of them do not have secretaries, and so simply let matters slide. In cases of this sort, though the tradespeople lose a certain interest on their money, they are pretty sure of payment in the end.

Then there are the people who, although worth millions, always live up to a little more than their incomes. These recklessly run up bills without apparently a thought of eventual settlement. A shopkeeper in Bar Harbor, a silversmith, told me once that he had about forty thousand dollars on his books at the end of each season. One man, whose fortune was estimated at about eight millions, had owed him fifteen hundred dollars for ten years.

"I put the matter quite clearly to him last summer," said the worthy shopkeeper; "told him I was losing interest on my money, etc. 'Oh, that's all right,' said the millionaire brightly, 'just charge me interest. Capital idea!'"

The bill and interest are still accruing no doubt.

Druggists, florists, jewelers, modistes, to say nothing of the plain butcher, grocer and baker, suffer dreadfully at the hands of their wealthy patrons and many a small concern has been forced out of business by being too lavish with its credit.

And there are so many small stores, each vying with the others for the trade of the rich, that not any of them dares to make a stand against these people and to force an issue. If Brown and Brown refuses you further credit, you can always go to Smith and Smith, who have long been waiting eagerly for your patronage. And then how easy to cast aspersions upon the firm of Brown and Brown and to influence your friends in favor of the newer firm!

No, indeed! these poor shopkeepers don't dare to kick. They are tied hand and foot, and the people who trade with them know it and exploit them quite mercilessly.

A few firms in Newport banded together some years ago and demanded the settlement of all old scores before further credit would be given. Those firms were boycotted immediately by all the summer colony and have never been able to recover substantial footing since. Who are the shopkeepers, indeed, to presume to dictate terms to those who patronize them? Bridge debts, gambling debts, club debts, these are settled immediately. As to the other debts, let them wait. If a man goes into bankruptcy he settles his club debts first and in full; then the tradespeople must perforce be content with a few cents on the dollar. Strange code of honor, isn't it?

No, it is not the extravagance of Society I find fault with; it is the petty mean economies. There is something quite recklessly daring and glorious in spending twenty thousand dollars on a dinner. I like the idea; it savors of the Caesars. The image of a pretty woman in a *robe de nuit*, advertised to have cost a thousand dollars, is rather a pleasing one. But the man or woman who has a million or so and deliberately does his fellowmen for a few cents is a menace to Society. I know of one man worth perhaps twenty millions who keeps himself supplied with good cigars at the expense of his various hosts.

This same man lost a very beautiful dog at the Richmond dog show two years ago.

The animal was worth many hundred dollars and had been a great pet.

The man refused to have the dog carted off and buried.

"Throw him in the ash barrel," he said.

What was sentiment to the saving of a few cents?

Again, a woman well known in Narragansett cut down her usual donation to the Children's Home at Christmas time, on the plea of hard times, and then bought the same week a beautiful little Jacobean bed for her favorite Pekinese at the modest sum of eight hundred dollars!

There are men who deliberately forget to sign their bar checks at the clubs, and there are women who will cheat the charitable associations with which they are connected. The servants suffer particularly at the hands of people of this sort. In a great many establishments owned by people of fabulous wealth the servants do not get enough to eat. There was an exposé of this in our newspapers a few years ago at the time of a rather notorious Society divorce.

I heard an interesting story in connection with the infantile paralysis epidemic last summer. A millionaire of Bar Harbor mentioned to his chauffeur that he thought it would be a good idea to send his wife and four youngsters into the country for the summer.

"Mrs. B—— is afraid for herself and the baby, you know," said the man.

"But," protested the chauffeur, "I can't afford it—I haven't the money!"

Whereupon he was discharged. He had been in the employ of the family six years.

A great many men connected with the Stock Exchange also resort to the meanest little tricks to bring about their own ends. False tips are often flashed about at dinners for the benefit of the waiters and the people in the kitchen. A very prominent broker once deliberately gave a bad tip to the elevator boy in his hotel, and no doubt cleaned up as a result of the boy's prattle to the other guests. I have seen men with all the suavity they were capable of talking investments to artisans of the meanest order, who at the most could muster only a few hundred dollars.

So in the business world as in the domestic world, self is the dominating note. The wealthy are most arrogant in their assertion of self, and it is by dint of the force of that very arrogance that they are a power in our nation. The cold insolence of their claims constitutes them a factor.

IV

THE attitude of the average society man and woman toward their families

is another evidence of their absolute disregard of everything but self. There are, generally, two or three children in each family. Women usually allow themselves to have that number for purely economic reasons; heirs are quite necessary in families of wealth. But the women seem to feel no responsibility of motherhood at all. Many children come into the world handicapped in the first place. Then they are immediately passed over to the care of servants, and that is an end of the parental responsibility.

I am going to sketch for you now a few of the domestic disasters that have happened in Society in the last few years. If each person involved had thought less of self, had been willing to give in just a little bit in the stress of everyday life, the tragedies might have been averted.

Craybourne Smith married Mildred Ames when he was just graduated from college. Theirs was not a temporary enamourment, for they had known each other from childhood and had been devoted through all their boy and girl years. They were quite madly in love, and it seemed as if Society had at last succeeded in achieving a marriage worth while.

But within a year there were rumors of discontent.

The young wife had a bevy of relations who almost before the honeymoon was over descended upon the establishment. If they didn't exactly live there, they succeeded in giving the appearance of doing so.

The husband protested; the wife took the part of her relatives, and that was the beginning. The husband then took up horse racing and was thrown naturally with men of a low order. Then it was the wife's turn to protest, but he yielded no more to her than she had to him.

So, eventually, the world that is always lying in wait, outside, claimed him for its own. He lived through one spectacular affair after another and his name was blazoned forth in all the newspapers. It was an instance of bril-

liant vitality misspent. Had the wife been one whit more thoughtful in the beginning—but then, who can tell? She divorced him after a few years and he was killed not long after in a motor accident.

Elizabeth Kent married William Manning for his money. She made no pretenses and after the marriage coolly ignored her husband. He was rather crude and a bit stupid, but in the end was goaded into doing rather sensational things to prove to the world that his wife's intolerance of him was a matter of complete indifference to him. She divorced him later to marry someone else, but his life proved a ruined one. The dissipation she had goaded him into "got" him, and he never succeeded in pulling himself together.

Dorothy Moreland was the daughter of a wealthy mine owner. She married Bob Worlington when she was only eighteen. Bob had position; Dorothy had the money. It was an excellent arrangement. Besides, Dorothy

was very much in love with Bob, and Bob gave a pretty good imitation of returning her devotion.

Within a year of their marriage Dorothy discovered that Bob was enamored of a very charming little actress. He expressed no contrition for what he was doing, gave Dorothy to understand he was doing more than his share in presenting her with his name. Dorothy is now one of the most discussed women of the younger set. Her life is a quite reckless one, and she flaunts one lover after another. The world shrugs and speaks of "bad blood."

You see the pity of it all. These people are as truly victims of circumstances as the beggars in the gutter. All the pleasure in the world is theirs and all the temptation and the restlessness. There's pathos in the bread line, but there's greater pathos in the automobile line. And so, brilliant, restless, sining, striving, arrogant, insolent, Society goes on, and all we can do is to watch and wonder.

NOTE: *The fourth installment of "The Sins of the Four Hundred," dealing with the orgies of the smart set, will appear in the next number.*



THE ARCH-STRATEGIST

By June Gibson

THAT man at the opposite table—

The one whose companion is so beautiful,
And who is so absorbed in him—
I wish to attract his attention.
I shall smile at the man by my side,
And touch him with my slim fingers and look into his eyes,
So that the beautiful companion of the man at the opposite table will become interested in him.....
And he in her.....
Then I can smile at the man at the opposite table unmolested.



THE LITTLE KISS

By Arthur Hillary

SOME people would have called him
a silly ass.

Certainly he was a sentimentalist.
Seated in his San Francisco hotel
he blew Her a Little Kiss.

"Fly to Her, O Little Kiss," he mur-
mured to his invisible envoy. "Fly to
her over the cruel mountains and the
scorching deserts and the drowsy ham-
lets and the sordid cities which lie be-
tween our loving hearts. Fly swiftly to
Her, O dear Little Kiss, and softly rest
upon Her lovely lips!"

As behooved a loyal and obedient
Little Kiss, the tiny emissary made the
arduous journey across the continent.
Oh, what a hard, wearing trip it was,
too!

The Little Kiss looked and looked
and looked for Her.

Finally it managed to find Her—at a
brilliant ball.

She was in a conservatory—with a
man.

The man was so handsome and attrac-
tive that the Little Kiss instantly
disliked him.

"How weary I am!" breathed the
Little Kiss. "How glad I am to rest at
last upon the lips of my master's Love!"

And it ran joyously to Her.

Then something dreadful happened.

Just as the Little Kiss nestled luxuri-
ously upon Her lovely lips, it was
crushed to death by the lips of the hand-
some man.



IT IS ONLY THEN

By Muna Lee

WHEN you are absent.
The thought of you beats on my heart
With the angry monotony of rain.
It is only when you come,
And your arms are about me,
That I can forget you.



WHEN the man grows garrulous and the woman reticent, one is assured
that he is either proposing to her or is drunk.



A MAN OF THIRTY-EIGHT

By Henry Altimus

A MAN of thirty-eight, in love for the first time, is bound to cut a rather pathetic figure.

Pendleton Gilder was thirty-eight, he was in love for the first time, and, circumstance and Gilder being what they were, he cut a very tragic figure.

The circumstance, to be brief, was summed up in the symbol "Mrs." in front of Lola Hamilton's name. As for Gilder, he was assistant professor of philosophy at the university. The combination proved a very trying one; for, though as a philosopher Gilder was daring, original and unacademic in the extreme, as a man he was timid, conventional, and all too easily daunted.

He was tall, fair, not at all unattractive, though somewhat clumsy; but despite his attractive person and fine address he had never appealed to the imagination of women. Not that he had never given any thought to women or love, for, though his studies filled his life amply enough, he had given much thought to the subtle emotions of the heart.

At twenty he had dreamed ardently of love. He knew it would come to him, as it came to every man, and he serenely awaited its coming. But the years went by and love eluded him—avoided him, he thought—and at thirty-five he began to wonder whether he knew what love really was.

He began to fear that he might have a false conception of it, that it might have presented itself many times and passed by unrecognized. He had thought he would recognize it by a quickening of the pulse, by a trembling of the lips, a faltering of speech, but perhaps that was not the way to know

it. How, then, should he become aware of it?

He was totally at a loss. He could not admit to himself that love had not come to him and perhaps never would. He felt that he was merely lacking in the faculty for knowing it, and he was afraid that he might never acquire that faculty and die without ever having been in love only because of the want of it.

But the day, almost the moment, he met Lola Hamilton he knew that he was in love—that she was the first woman he had ever loved or ever could have loved. And he knew that love had never passed him by unrecognized. For all the symptoms were there, exactly as he had always imagined them—the world-old, trite, tremulous pangs of love's birth, intensified by years of waiting. He loved her on sight.

He met her at a box party at the Manhattan Opera House. His old friend, Philip Ballard, the artist, had sent him an invitation. Napierkowska was to dance, her début in America, and Ballard wanted his friends to see her. Gilder had accepted the invitation. He was on good terms with the kindly old artist, but he saw little of him. He did not care for the easy, bohemian clique that used the Ballard home as a playground for paradox and naughty heresies. They were too trivial, too unconventional, and he was afraid he would meet them at the party. But he wanted to see Napierkowska, and he went.

He arrived late and the box was full. He knew most of those present and he was warmly greeted. They liked Gilder, though they thought he was a little

stiff and old-fashioned. They often said that he was behind the times and lived only in the twentieth century, but, though they poked fun at him, they did it without any real malice.

The moment he touched her hand on being presented to her, he knew that she was *the woman* and that it was *the thing*. He had a swift, dazzling impression of a soft hand, laughing blue eyes, a frothy mass of bronze hair, a sensitive though fragile figure, and the next moment he had to shake hands with Harry Hamilton.

Then, as he stood clumsily waiting for further presentations, though on entering he had noticed that the Hamiltons were the only strangers in the box, some one shoved him into a chair, and he observed to his delight and distress that he was seated directly behind Lola Hamilton.

They were not interested in what preceded the appearance of the little dancer from Paris, and they engaged in loud and gay conversation amongst themselves. Lola Hamilton swung her chair around a trifle, turning her back saucily on the rest with the deliberate suggestion that she wanted the latest arrival for herself, and at once she engaged Gilder in animated conversation. It wasn't really a conversation, for Gilder was able to respond to her queries and promptings with hesitant monosyllables while he listened to the song of her voice, watched the movement and caprice of her delicate lips, and swung in the depths of her deep blue eyes.

He grew uneasy after a time, distressed at his own stupidity, intimidated by the exclusiveness of her attention. He glanced toward the others, toward Harry Hamilton in particular, expecting to meet reproof in their eyes, but they were paying no attention to him.

She was outrageously partial, and he was surprised that the rest, above all her husband, were not resentful. He could not understand it, and, though he should have liked nothing better than to have this wonderful creature to himself, he had a feeling that his friends must be scandalized at his indiscret-

conduct; and so, blushing to the top of his ears, he kept edging his chair away from Lola Hamilton and making desperate efforts to break into the conversation of the others.

She observed his efforts, and, though she tried hard to retain him, she failed.

Finally, realizing that he was in agony, she swung around quickly, leaned forward, and, looking up into his eyes, asked:

"You bad boy, don't you like me?"

She spoke loud enough for the others to hear, and for half a minute Gilder felt as though his head were spinning around on his shoulders like a top. Yet, though her question must have been heard by everyone in the box, no one seemed to consider it of sufficient import to pay any heed to it, and Gilder was relieved.

Lola Hamilton's question still rang in his ears, and her piquant face, with parted lips and wide blue eyes, was right beneath his own. For a moment he felt as though the truth would pour in an irrepressible torrent through his tightly clenched teeth, that he would tell her she was adorable, that he was mad about her, that she was the fulfilment of his long-cherished dream of love; but the mere thought of his uttering a sound at that moment and in the presence of his friend terrified him into speechlessness.

The question, within the hearing of her husband, had been so unexpected, so shocking, that the best he could do was to pretend he had not heard her and conceal his agitation by turning his head from her.

But Lola Hamilton was persistent.

"Harry!" she called across the box, assuming a delightfully petulant air. "He's trying to get away from me. Please make him pay attention to me."

Harry Hamilton apologetically pressed the hand of the young woman with whom he had been conversing as he leaned forward in the direction of Lola. He smiled good-naturedly.

"Good for you, Gilder," he called back. "Don't give in!"

"Harry!" exclaimed Lola reprovingly.

"Well, little vampire," replied Hamilton, making a triumphant grimace at her, "you're due for a failure at last. I hear Gilder is a woman-hater. Perhaps that'll bring you down a peg or two. Good luck to him."

And he turned to his companion again.

Fortunately the lights were extinguished at this point, allowing her a graceful exit from her unsuccessful encounter. Gilder, too, was grateful for the respite, for Napierkowska was announced and he would have half an hour in which to recover from the shock of his new emotion and the panic into which he had been thrown by Lola Hamilton's distressing attentions.

But, before the curtain had gone up, he saw her lean toward him, felt her fingers tangle themselves in the lapels of his coat, and heard her whisper, her face close to his:

"Mr. Gilder, are you a woman-hater?"

She asked the question playfully, lightly, but in the delicate play of her fingers against his bosom there was an invitation, an avowal; and Gilder, surrendering himself completely to an impulse he could not check, lowered his head until his lips touched her fingers. He was surprised at the brutality with which he pressed them against his bosom.

She did not utter a sound, acknowledging his tribute with a scarcely perceptible lift of her fingers against his lips.

Then she extricated them softly, and, after a moment's pause, said:

"I'm jealous of Napierkowska already. She's going to take all your attention from me."

But she was wrong. During the half hour that the little dancer exhibited her art to an American audience for the first time, Pendleton Gilder saw no one and thought of no one but Lola Hamilton, the impulsive, bewitching, irritating, irresistible woman who had brought love and romance into his life

with such a blinding flare. Once or twice the vigorous hand-clapping of the audience drew his eyes to the stage, but only for a moment, for immediately they wandered back to his rapt contemplation of Lola.

With the rash ardor of twenty-one, Gilder vowed to himself that she was the only woman he had ever loved or ever would love, and that no one woman could ever take her place; but with the sober vision of thirty-eight he realized that the fire that had been kindled within him was a consuming flame which would wither him pitilessly if he did not extinguish it. She was a married woman, she belonged to another, and he could never have her.

He saw all that clearly. He was a philosopher. But he had never been in love, and, drunk with the drug of her loveliness and the novelty of his passion, he felt for the moment that he could sacrifice honor, family, career, and, above all, his life-long allegiance to the moral ideals of his Puritan forebears for one hour of mad abandon with her. After that, no matter how empty his life might be, he would feel a triumphant sense always of not having lived in vain. He did not dare contemplate lasting possession of her. It was too overwhelming a conception for his imagination to compass.

Besides, he could see that she and her husband understood each other too well.

He loved her. But did she care for him? True, she had courted him scandalously, had been even distressingly attentive, but she could not have been in earnest—not with her husband within sight and hearing. He could not take her overtures seriously. It was merely a bit of mischievous fooling. And yet, though her manner had been playful and her words perhaps chaffing, he had read in her eyes and in the touch of her fingers a message that seemed unmistakable, however elusive.

Then, while these thoughts were racing back and forth in his brain, like a swift shuttle, he heard a deafening burst of applause, and, roused out of his reflections, he brought his palms to-

gether weakly several times. He was aware that his friends had risen, and then he observed that Harry Hamilton was helping Lola into her coat.

She was holding her hand out to him and he advanced and grasped it in his. She pressed it gently.

"Do come and see us some time, Mr. Gilder, won't you?" she said. "Harry, you must ask him to call."

"By all means, old man," said Hamilton, taking Gilder's hand. "You're such a big, steady chap, you'll do her a lot of good. You see what a nervous little animal she is."

"Yes, indeed," murmured Lola, assuming a helpless air. Then she threw back her head slightly and showed her fine, white teeth.

"And come about tea-time. Harry never gets home before seven or so."

Gilder lowered his head, not daring to meet Hamilton's eyes, but he lifted it again quickly on becoming aware of the card Hamilton was offering him.

"Any time at all, old man. We'll be delighted," he was saying.

"Thank you," muttered Gilder, taking the card.

He shook hands perfunctorily with the others and hurried out of the theatre.

II

WHEN he arrived home he was gratified to learn that his mother was out and would not return before dinner. He did not want to face her, for fear she would guess that something unusual had occurred. But when he came down to dinner he saw at once that she had divined his perturbation, and when she took him in her arms affectionately and asked what was the matter he lied to her for the first time in his life and replied that it was nothing—he had had a hard day at the university.

Gilder and his widowed mother were on excellent terms. She had always been his friend and confidante, and he had always consulted her when in difficulties. He should have liked to tell her about Lola. He knew his mother would be overjoyed to know that at

last some woman had touched his heart.

But he was always frank and honest with his mother, and it was this very frankness that prevented him from taking her into his confidence. He knew he would have to tell her that Lola was married, and he did not wish to pain her needlessly. So he kept his secret to himself.

He called on Lola Hamilton the following afternoon. He had not meant to do so. Indeed, he had fully determined that it would be best never to see her again; but, when four o'clock came and he had slipped his lecture notes into his portfolio, his resolve suddenly went completely to pieces. He knew he must see her or perish. He was like a man dying of thirst who contemplates the ocean, knowing well that its vast waters can never quench his thirst, yet allowing his eyes to wander voluptuously over the wet expanse.

He called on her half fearful and half hopeful that, alone with him, she might so completely batter down his restraint with her immoderate friendliness that he might be moved to ignore the obligation he owed her as a married woman. But he had been with her but a few minutes when he realized that the fact that she was alone with him in no wise altered her attitude.

She was just as impulsive, just as attentive, just as friendly as she had been at the theater, neither more nor less, and he knew she would have acted and spoke precisely as she did even if Harry Hamilton were in the room with them.

How much her unconcealed friendliness toward him meant to her he could not tell, but he knew that there was nothing covert or disloyal in their seeing each other. And he came to see, during the course of the afternoon, that, if there were any threat to the attachment that was springing up between them, it would come from him rather than from her; for he realized that it was inevitable that he should fall more deeply and more inextricably in love with her every time he saw her.

He called on her frequently after that, generally late in the afternoon;

and sometimes, as she had done at the theater when she so subtly acknowledged the pressure of his lips on her fingers, she would permit herself an impulsive liberty which made Gilder think he was a fool not to see that her playful manner was merely a cloak for an affection that was much more than friendly, a passion that she was too refined and too loyal to make more manifest.

At such times he would go almost mad with the agony of doubt and hope, and it was all he could do to keep himself from catching her in his arms and making an ardent avowal of his love.

Sometimes Hamilton would come home before Gilder could tear himself away and would insist that he stay for dinner. Gilder came to know him very well, to like him immensely. He was a straightforward, open-handed, open-hearted fellow, of limited culture but of unlimited generosity and breadth of view. He and Lola seemed very happy together. Their marriage seemed a perfect thing. They did not take it as solemnly and severely as most people did, as Gilder himself did. They were like a couple of comrades living together because it was such good sport and because they understood each other so well. Marriage was like a game to them; they did not take it seriously, but they seemed to think that, played properly, one could get a heap of amusement out of it.

When he stayed for dinner, Gilder generally left early, despite Hamilton's insistence that he remain. He felt like an intruder, an insidious plotter, in this happy household; and he invariably left with a firm resolve not to see Lola again alone.

But when he called he always selected an hour when Hamilton was least likely to be there. He came often. He could not keep away. He could not understand himself why he saw so much of her, for he paid for every hour of joy in her company with sleepless nights and wretched days. Yet he persevered with his visits. Deep down in his heart, unacknowledged by himself, there was a covert hope that something

might happen—Hamilton might die, there might be a divorce, anything might occur to give Lola her liberty, and then— But the months went by, and nothing happened, and Gilder knew that he was to die with love within reach and yet unattainable.

III

At the end of a year, Pendleton Gilder was a very much altered man. He slept badly and ate badly. He had grown pale and thin. He had lost interest in his usual pursuits, and he knew that the authorities were not satisfied with his work at the university.

He realized perfectly that he was going to pieces, but he could not summon the courage to pull himself together and give up all thought of Lola. In such measure was he faithful to his unfulfilled love of Lola Hamilton.

One afternoon, at the close of his last lecture, he telephoned to ask if he might call on her. He had been away for several days and he had missed Lola frightfully. But the telephone operator informed him that the Hamiltons had left the day before for the West and that they had given no address.

The shock of the information caused a deathly pallor to come into Gilder's already pale face. He dropped the receiver and his hand fell limply to his side. Then he recovered himself, snatched up his overcoat, rushed out into the open, hailed a taxi, and gave the chauffeur the Hamiltons' address.

It was true. They had gone, without leaving word whither. The operator was able to repeat only what he had said over the telephone before.

Gilder walked all the way home. He left word that he would not be down for dinner, and locked himself into his room.

She had gone. Not a word of explanation. Not a word of regret. It was cruel! Hadn't she cared for him at all? Or (and the thought rose in his mind quite unexpectedly) had she left without a message as a rebuke? Had he disappointed her? And, when he

thought she was chaffing him, had she really intended to mock him for his lack of courage? He bit his lips until they almost bled. He had loved her. Such love comes but once in a man's lifetime. He should not have denied himself. He should have yielded to the pressure of his passion and defied the conventions.

But what did it all matter now? She was gone. He had lost her irretrievably. He made inquiries of Ballard, of the others, but they did not even know that the Hamiltons had gone away.

Gilder suffered horribly. He took no one into his confidence. For two long years he bore his sorrow in silence.

Then, one day, he ran into Harry Hamilton on the street. The shock of the meeting almost paralyzed him. He managed to call his name, and Hamilton turned and ran forward to wring his hand.

When Gilder found his tongue at last, though the name of Lola was on his lips and the thought of her filled his mind, he managed to control himself sufficiently to exchange formal greetings and questions.

Then finally, when Hamilton had explained that he had been traveling aimlessly about the country since he left and had come back at last, homesick for the old crowd, Gilder asked, with extraordinary self-control:

"And how is Lola?" He blushed slightly, nevertheless, as he asked the question. He thought he should have said "Mrs. Hamilton," and he wondered whether Hamilton would resent his familiarity—but he didn't.

"Haven't the faintest idea," he said indifferently, shrugging his shoulders.

"You haven't—" began Gilder, and then stopped in amazement.

"Haven't seen her in a year now. I sometimes wonder what's become of her."

Gilder caught Hamilton's arm to support himself. His knees were giving way under him. "Good God, Hamilton, you don't mean," he gasped, "that you and your wife have separated, that you—"

"Wife?" asked Hamilton, a smile spreading over his features. "By Jove, Gilder, didn't you know? Why, I never was married to the little animal."



A CIGARETTE IN SLENDER FINGERS

By Morris Gilbert

A BAUBLE of slow-breathing scent
That glows anon and darkling lingers,
Making its moment opulent—
A cigarette in slender fingers. . . .

A little play of level eyes
Aglint with quick ephemeral yearning;
An instant—and an enterprise. . . .
Then embers, dead and done with burning;



THE THOUSANDTH WOMAN

By Charles Stokes Wayne

IT was a lie he told her. But he had been telling her lies of the same sort for over a year now, and they came so readily, so naturally, that it wasn't in reason for her to question.

In the beginning he had been rather clumsy at it, he thought. He was all too self-conscious to carry off the deception with just the right savor of the casual. He overburdened his announcements with particulars. He elaborated the falsehood; dressing it in raiment which Truth, whose privilege it is to go naked and unashamed, would have blushed to be seen in.

Only his record, he believed, saved him. In the fifteen years of their married life his veracity had stood the test perfectly. It was not merely unblotted, it was unblurred. The stage of over-adornment, however, had now long since passed. It had been succeeded by simple statement, with no added details to mistakenly add an air of verisimilitude.

"I shall dine at the club this evening," was the way he put it. He didn't say why or with whom. And dining at the club voluminously covered everything. It meant that he would not be home before dinner. It meant that he would be out late; that he would not see her again, in all probability, until the following morning.

Mrs. Daffodin rarely asked questions. Her husband dined at his club at least twice each week. She had come to take it as a matter of course. And in speaking of it to her friends she took pains to approve it.

"I believe every husband should do the same," she was wont to say. "Boardman has grown younger in the

past year because of it. It broadens a man to associate with congenial men friends. The wife who insists on tying her husband to her apron-strings is wronging not only him but herself. We really are getting to care more than ever for each other, Boardman and I, simply because we are not enough together to get on one another's nerves."

Even now, though, in spite of knowing his wife's expressed attitude, Daffodin never told this oft-repeated lie without a pricking of conscience. He was by nature and instinct honest. He loved the truth as a gambler loves chance, and he loathed deceit. There were times, indeed, when he suffered agonies of remorse. Yet at no moment in the twelvemonth and more had he thought seriously of changing the conditions which made lying a necessity.

On the contrary, the infatuation which linked him to Lisa Harlow intensified daily. If he felt on occasions the prickings of conscience he was nevertheless without regret. What he had done—what he was still doing—he believed to be justified by circumstances. He had not gone into it rashly. There had been, it is true, an exceptionally powerful attraction to begin with. So powerful, so unusual was it, indeed, that it had alarmed, not to say terrified, him.

For Daffodin was no longer a young man. He had turned forty, and he had led, up to the day on which she entered his office, a life of impeccable rectitude. Because of these things it was natural that he should deliberate. He moved slowly, reassuring himself at each step, by way of extenuation, that his motives were unselfishly eleemosynary. In all

honesty he persuaded himself that he was incapable of an ulterior purpose.

And out of it all had developed this: a double life, each side secret and apart from the other, each necessary to a half of his divided nature; and both to his full, his complete, felicity.

Boardman Daffodin had married at twenty-two a young woman but a year his junior; a fair, almost colorless creature, tall and angular, who was teaching at the time in one of the public schools of his home town. Impelled to marriage more by the opportunity it would afford her for her own intellectual development than by any sentimentality or ardency of temperament, she had soon demonstrated to her husband that romance was but a figment, and utterly unworthy either the consideration or the indulgence of serious-minded persons, such as were he and she. Mind, and its cultivation, were with Emily Daffodin the only worthwhile factors. She was unimaginatively bookish.

And Boardman, who devoted himself more to money-getting than to letters, and was wont to revere his wife's superior attainments, had been uncomplainingly content with the contrast which association with her afforded. She helped him. She kept him in touch with a world apart and distinct from the sordid grind of his banking and his brokerage.

Nor did he now, in the full flush and fervor of this romantic experience, falter in his appreciation of the other and older privilege. There was no change in him, so far as Emily Daffodin could discover. He was no less devoted, no less considerate, no less affectionate. If the ardor of his youth had grown tepid, it had done so by naturally graduated degrees. And she was glad of it. She preferred infinitely that their love should be of this consanguineous kind. They were ideal companions, like brother and sister, more than like the conventional husband and wife, such as they had once been.

Daffodin knew this. She had taken pains to let him know it, just as she

had repeatedly given to him, as well as to her other intimate friends, the full assurance of her approval of his dinners at the club.

It was more or less easy for him, therefore, to salve his conscience for the deception of Emily. But there were times when his enforced absence of candor with Lisa Harlow cut deeply into his sensitive soul. For she had assumed from the first that he was unmarried; that he made his home with his sister. And, taking this assumption as really more nearly approximating the truth than she would ever be able to understand from the actual facts, he had failed to enlighten her.

The lie told to his wife had been dropped at the breakfast table. And now, over the dinner table, in an excellent but somewhat obscure French restaurant, he was, despite the protesting of his inward monitor, dropping a far more pregnant one for the consumption of the strikingly pretty girl who sat across from him.

"The Mrs. Daffodin whose picture you saw in the paper, my dear, is my cousin's wife. There are two Boardman Daffodins, you know."

His eyes were on his plate as he said it. He feared to trust them to her incisive gaze, lest they betray him. For her question had caught him unprepared.

"Oh, dear!" she gasped in sudden relief. "Now isn't that always the way? Here I've been going through misery all day, believing you a married man, and thinking horrid things about you. And there's nothing to it, after all. Didn't you notice I had something on my mind? I tried awful hard to act just the same as usual. But I know I must have made an awful mess of it. Oh, Boardie, darling, you can't imagine what I suffered and how perfectly happy your explanation has made me."

He looked at her now and managed a smile. She had a piquant little face, with the cutest little, slightly tip-tilted nose imaginable; and her big, round, dark eyes, deeply shadowed, held still, it seemed to him, a reflection of the or-

deal through which she had passed. His heart ached for her. But he said:

"Silly little Lisa! Why on earth didn't you tell me about it at once? Why wait until we got here and were half through dinner?"

"I was afraid of the truth," she admitted. "It was the cocktail, I suppose, and the wine that gave me the courage."

It was on the tip of his tongue to say that it was unkind of her to doubt him. But it got no further. He had been hypocrite enough in making that spur-of-the-moment interpretation. If eventually she should learn the truth this dissemblance would add to his humiliation; would make him appear more of a scoundrel than ever; since he had never actually before denied that he was married.

"Suppose," he said, with a sudden lapse into gravity, "that there weren't two of us of the same name. Suppose you had learned in this way that I have a wife. What would you have done?"

She laughed nervously. The supposition, as he put it, in view of her so recent relief, suggested too strongly the spectre just laid.

"I don't know," was her answer, as she fingered the stem of her champagne glass. "You see, I asked myself that question a thousand times today. And I considered one thing after another. But I couldn't decide just which would be best. I thought I shouldn't love you any more. I knew it would be doubly wrong ever to see you again. And then I thought of what life would be without you. It was hard enough before I knew you. But if my fault would be twice as great, my wretchedness in giving you up would be twice as great, too. So, you see, dear, I just couldn't make up my mind. So I thought, maybe, it would be best to say nothing. Let it go, you know, and then I'd never be sure. That would have been better than to learn for certain there was someone to share you with."

"So that was the idea! And then you thought better of it and risked everything, after all?"

Lisa nodded in that quick, spirited way she had of nodding.

"And it was best, wasn't it?"

"By far. I want you always to come to me frankly with every trouble you have. Don't nurse imagined wrongs, my sweetheart. It only makes them grow bigger. Will you promise me?"

She promised.

"It is better to thresh things out, isn't it?" she added. "You love me more than anybody or anything in all the world, don't you, Boardie, dear?"

"Far more," he assured her. "I never knew it was possible to love as I love you."

And then, as happened periodically, they talked over their year of rhapsody, beginning at that first moment of meeting, when she had brought him the stock certificate found among her dead husband's effects, and ending with to-day, and that accidental discovery of Mrs. Boardman Daffodin's depiction in a morning newspaper.

II

It was by just the merest chance that Lisa, entering the Daffodin offices, had met Daffodin, himself, in the big room given over to the firm's clients, with its quotation board at the far end. He seldom appeared in that room, where his office manager presided. And it was the office manager she had been directed to see.

She was confused and embarrassed by the throng of men she found herself among, some seated in a double row of chairs before the board, others bending over noisy stock-tickers, and others, still, moving nervously about. Then she had caught the questioning glance of this one big, good-looking man, with kindly eyes and a splash of white amongst the tawny hair near each temple, and had impulsively thrust the certificate into his hand as she stammered her question as to its value. It wasn't worth a picayune. Daffodin saw that at once. But he had asked her into his private office, and in the conversation that ensued Lisa had, without in the

least intending to, let certain indications of her pressing need escape her.

She had been a widow for more than a year then. Her husband had been dissipated and had ill-treated her. He had left her a little money, but it was about all gone by this time, and she had been trying to get employment.

But there was nothing that she could do well enough to earn a living by. She was woefully unequipped. And now that her means were exhausted she couldn't pay for an existence while she learned something. If the stock would sell for enough to give her lodging and food for a few months she would take a business course somewhere, she thought. Or she might try to get into the moving pictures.

Daffodin learned only a part of this on her first visit. The rest came out at two or three subsequent ones, when, ostensibly, he was endeavoring to turn over her shares for her. He had advanced her twenty-five dollars on the first day, not only because he pitied her, but because, as has already been said, she held for him a strangely unusual and moving attraction. He saw in her the butterfly type; yet beneath her lightness, her capriciousness, her childish incapacity, he detected an undeveloped side of her nature which he longed to bring into fuller being.

Then, when as the proceeds of the stock sale—really the certificate had long since gone into his waste basket—she had between \$500 and \$600 in cash, Lisa had actually tried to earn something as an extra with the photoplay people.

For a whole week she went to studio after studio, and agent after agent, with only discouragement for her pains. Then, when she had about given up hope, she got a single day's work in a "strike scene," in which she was one of fifty women, wives of striking factory hands, who force their way into the home of the factory owner in his absence, and tear into shreds the fine clothes of his wife and daughters. Yet, as one of fifty, she was singled out by the assistant director for lewd ad-

vances. And, burning with indignation, she had permitted the experience to end her efforts in that direction.

Meanwhile, Daffodin had kept in constant touch with her. He saw her almost daily, and naturally he learned of this incident. As an indication of her unpracticality, she had taken a small apartment and furnished it, and there Daffodin visited her. For awhile the visits were circumspect almost to a fault. But his passion for her was growing now by leaps and bounds, and there soon came a time when if he failed to see her for twenty-four hours a gloomy, morbid unhappiness was his portion.

The end, of course, was inevitable. There came an evening, at length, in which Fate injected the supreme moment. They loved. And their loving was the most beautiful thing in all their life's experience.

III

MUTUALLY absorbed in their tender rehearsal, their dinner period had been prolonged beyond the usual. They had roamed and romped together through elysian fields; they had soared ecstatically from somber earth to the glorious empyrean of immortal bliss made manifest. And they had returned, not with any shocking abruptness, but with a lingering of locked eyes and, unmindful, if not careless, of observation, with warmly clasping hands across the table and in full view.

Back once more to their contrastingly sordid surroundings, Daffodin took up the *addition* which his waiter had, with studied self-effacement, slipped, quite unnoticed by him, beside his plate. As his right hand sought his pocket for the roll of bills he was never without, his gaze traveled across the room as if drawn. And, in spite of him, his face went suddenly white.

Lisa, whose eyes had never left him, saw the change of color, and with an arresting tremor of uneasiness glanced over her shoulder in the same direction, just in time to see a young man, with

a young woman, at a table against the opposite wall, bow, as she thought, somewhat coldly.

As a matter of fact Daffodin bowed, too, perfunctorily. But Lisa didn't see that. Instinctively, she felt that something was wrong. And Daffodin, on his part, knew that for the first time in all these fourteen months he had been discovered. He said nothing, because he was thinking very hard and very quickly. He had only an instant to decide what it were best to do.

Then, suddenly, precipitately, he rose to his feet, murmured an apology to Lisa, and strode across the room.

He felt himself powerless to disarm the suspicion he read in the cold stare and belated bow, but he knew that his companion had observed his embarrassment and he believed this the best way of managing the matter.

Forcing a smile and extending a hand, he said, cordially enough:

"Why, Tom, my boy, I haven't seen you in months. Been out of town, haven't you?"

Tom Gerould had risen, napkin in hand. Apparently he didn't see the hand which Daffodin held out for just an instant and then dropped.

"No," came the answer. "I've been right here all the winter. I called on Emily only yesterday."

"Odd she shouldn't have mentioned it. I've been wanting to talk a matter over with you. Will you be in your office in the morning at about eleven?"

The young man hesitated for just the shade of an instant.

"Yes," he answered, significantly. "I'll be there. I'll make a point of being there. There's something I want to talk to you about, too."

He made no offer to present Daffodin to the girl who was with him. And the iciness of his manner must have been apparent to her. Daffodin was horribly uncomfortable.

When he was back at his own table he said to Lisa:

"Surly brute, that fellow. A man I know in the Street. I'm in the position of having to ask a favor of him.

And I don't relish it. I wish to Heaven I hadn't seen him here, though, just at this time. I was so tremendously happy five minutes ago. And he's upset me completely."

Lisa was all sympathy. She was so glad that that was all. She had feared—but now that she came to think of it she didn't know just what it was that she had feared.

Boardman Daffodin took her home and left her almost immediately. He couldn't shake off his vexation. He couldn't rid himself of the panic of alarm that clung to him.

Tom Gerould was his brother-in-law. Emily was Tom's only sister, and he adored her.

IV

THERE was only one thing talked about in Gerould's office the next morning, and in the introduction of the subject Gerould, who was a lawyer, took the initiative. He did it in this way:

"You are the last man in the world, Daffodin, that I ever expected to see holding hands with a chicken over a restaurant table."

Daffodin, who had taken a chair opposite him, winced. He had passed a sleepless night, and his nerves were distressingly on edge. He looked years older than he was—grey and lined. His pale lips drew to a line.

"I don't question that," was his reply in measured tones. "I appreciate fully how it must have struck you. And I don't believe there is anything I can say that will materially alter your first impression. Indeed, I am not here to explain or to extenuate. You will take the incident, I suppose, at its surface value, drawing the most obvious conclusions. And, though I might combat that in a measure by pleading certain circumstances, I am not disposed to attempt it. What I ask, though, as man to man, is that you will make an effort to forget it. That you will hold your tongue about it."

Young Gerould drew down one corner of his lips in a sneer. In looks he was not unlike his sister. He had the

same eyes of neutral blue, he was sal-low, and he was painfully thin.

"You are afraid I might tell Emily. Is that it?"

"I fear that you may think it your duty. And I want to convince you that you would only give her pain to no purpose."

"By which you mean that you intend to go on deceiving her?"

"My deception, so long as she is in ignorance of it, cannot possibly harm her. She is perfectly contented. Under those conditions why in Heaven's name should she be enlightened? I am not neglecting her. I am robbing her of nothing that she values. By adding something to my own life—something of which I was denied for years—I am all the better fitted to contribute to Emily's happiness from the side of me she most appreciates."

"You believe that acquits you? That it justifies your disloyalty?"

"Absolutely."

"I'm sorry I can't agree with you. You are breaking the law of God, and the law of man. Still, I am not disposed to be unreasonable. If you will give me your word of honor as a man, Daffodin, to end your *liaison* at once—give up this creature, and return to the straight and narrow path of matrimonial rectitude—what I know shall go no farther. I'll forget it, as you ask. I'll hold my tongue."

The elder man came back strongly.

"That is impossible," he said. And he said it without an instant's hesitation. "There are reasons why I cannot consent to your terms, Tom; and they are not altogether selfish reasons, either. In the first place, it would be devilishly unfair to the girl."

The young attorney again drew down a corner of his thin lips.

"Make a settlement on her," he suggested. "She'll probably be delighted."

"She'd probably kill herself," was Daffodin's rejoinder.

Gerould laughed derisively.

"You are inexperienced, evidently, with women of her type. Either that or you are blinded by your own vanity.

If you like, I'll manage that end for you. Then you need never see her again. I'll guarantee she'll be overjoyed."

The color rushed to Boardman Daffodin's face and his hands clenched. But he choked back the indignant retort that tempted utterance.

"No," he said, calmly. "There'll be no settlement. I'll not give her up. In spite of your hasty and unflattering conclusion, the only fault in the young lady in reference is that she has loved too much. And as I share that fault with her I would be a dog to punish her for it."

"You're a dog to treat a good wife as you have been doing; and as you purpose to go on doing."

"But I tell you my wife is perfectly happy. It is you who threaten to make her wretched. 'Where ignorance is bliss—'

His brother-in-law interrupted him sharply.

"Cut that! It's sophistry. Ignorance is never admirable. Every hour of your association with your mistress is an hour of humiliation to my sister. That she doesn't know of it yet doesn't alter the truth in the least. I know of it, now, and that's enough. In my eyes she is a pitiable object."

"And you'd make her a pitiable object in her own as well, eh? That's the measure of your love for her."

"I'd have her free herself from a man so undeserving of her."

"I would to God she had a more deserving brother. If I had flaunted this other side of mine it would be different. I've been careful to a fault. There isn't a soul on earth who has an inkling of this but yourself. And why under Heaven you should have chosen that one restaurant in all New York, last night, or why I should have chosen it, is accounted for, I suppose, only on the theory that Fate is ironical."

"An all-seeing Providence," returned Gerould, "designed that your sin should find you out."

For an hour and more they attacked the problem on all sides without get-

ting any nearer to a satisfactory solution than at the outset.

"You refuse my condition?" asked Gerould as the clock on his desk indicated noon.

"Emphatically."

"Very well then. And I don't mind saying I'm sorry."

"Which means," queried Daffodin, hopeless, yet reluctant to leave without one final effort to make the younger man see his error, "that you are determined to wreck your sister's home and mine—a home in which there has been ideal affection and congeniality for fifteen years?"

"It is you who have undermined that already," came the answer. "I shall merely tell Emily how you have spread the powder and laid the fuse."

"You'll put the lighted match to it."

"Better I than some enemy. I'll be there to succor when the explosion comes."

THE days that followed were for Boardman Daffodin awful in what each foreboded. For Gerould had failed to indicate the moment or the hour of his proposed revelation; and Daffodin waited, with nerves stretched to a killing tension, for the dreaded signal from Emily that she had learned of his duplicity.

To each breakfast and to each dinner he entered with fear clutching his heart and his whole physical being a-tremble. For he was determined to force his strength to hold out until it came. It should not be charged to him either that he had fled in cowardice or that he had, of himself, faltered in the established routine of his home life.

Daily, he went to his office, according to custom, and, save that at moments he appeared strangely distract, he managed to mask the strain he was undergoing. And on certain evenings he went about with his wife, appearing beside her in the homes of friends, and in public gatherings—the theater, the opera, lectures—as had been his wont for years.

Nor did he fail in his two or three evenings a week at his "club." This sometimes meant dinner at a restaurant with Lisa, and sometimes dinner in her apartment. And if his wife, in the two weeks that thus dragged away, gave no sign of noting a change in him, it was not so with the younger woman. She found him moody, querulous, inattentive. She begged him to tell her what worried him. She was so sure that he was worried about something. In the end they quarreled over it. Each accused the other of lack of confidence, of deception.

The next time Daffodin saw Lisa she was unquestionably changed. She was as nervous and irritable as himself. There was another quarrel, more bitter than the first. Each said things they were afterwards sorry for. She reproached him for having secrets from her. If he cared for her as he pretended he'd spend more of his time with her. No wonder she was nervous. She was alone so much. She had, really, only one friend, a young married woman, easy-going and not over scrupulous, who knew of Daffodin and the relations that existed between them, but didn't mind.

"I can't always be at Susie's," she told him, "and Susie has other things to do than to be running here all the time. I don't care much for reading, you know. You don't want me to meet other men, no matter how innocently; so I've got to sit here, day after day, and evening after evening, with no one to talk to but a colored maid."

"You know I can't neglect my sister," he pleaded.

"Sister!" she snapped. "How do I know it's your sister?"

He started at this. In his overwrought condition, it was as though she had struck him in the face.

"You don't mean you doubt my word."

"You wouldn't be the first man to deceive a woman. I have only your word that the Mrs. Boardman Daffodin I saw in the paper was your cousin's wife. Funny you never spoke to me of

your cousin before in all the year and over we've known each other."

In the end there was a partial making-up.

Then Daffodin said:

"I'll spend tomorrow evening with you."

"You needn't put yourself out for me," she flung back. "Tomorrow evening I have an engagement. I'm not going to be at home."

"Where are you going?" he asked, nettled.

But she wouldn't tell him.

"You don't tell me every place you go," was her excuse.

And Daffodin went away in a rage, slamming the door after him. For him it seemed then as if the heavens had indeed fallen.

VI

HE stayed away from Lisa Harlow for a whole week. He did not communicate with her by letter nor by telephone, nor she with him. And in the meantime the placidity of his life with Emily continued unbroken. Perhaps, after all, Tom Gerould had relented. Perhaps, after all, his own arguments had borne weight.

At all events it was evident that he had been granted a reprieve.

At the end of the week his longing to see and be with Lisa again reached such a pitch that he called her up, intending to invite her out to dinner. But she was not at home.

"Please say to her, when she returns, that I will give myself the pleasure of dining with her at home," he directed.

But when he reached the apartment, bent on the delights of "making up," and the establishment of a new and better understanding between them, it was to be met by the announcement that Mrs. Harlow had left the city.

Daffodin's pulses seemed to freeze. His heart stood still, and there was a choking sensation in his throat.

"She lef' this yer letter for you, Mr. Daffodin," the maid added, taking ad-

vantage of his silence, and thrust at him a sealed envelope.

Ah, it was not so bad, then! She had evidently been called away suddenly. Possibly some of her people were ill. He knew that her parents and a sister and brother lived somewhere in Connecticut.

He thanked the maid, and as he waited for the elevator he tore off the end of the envelope and drew out the enclosure.

But, as he read, it was abruptly borne in upon him that his reassurance had been horribly premature. It was as if the sun of his life had been suddenly quenched and he stood in darkness.

Dear Boardie (*she wrote*): I'm so sorry that I got your goat the last time we saw each other, and that you left me in anger. It's not the way I want to remember you. For I'm never going to see you again—never. I am going to join an order of Catholic sisters and give my life up to penance for my sin in loving you and bringing unhappiness upon you. I can't blame you for telling me you were not married when you were. I suppose you thought you had to do that. But I guessed it from what happened in the restaurant that night, and afterwards I made sure. I called at your house and—well, I saw her, and I recognized her at once by the picture in the paper. I pretended I wanted to interest her in a working girls' home. Don't think I gave you away, for I didn't. I hope she'll never know about you and me. And I hope you'll never be untrue to her again. And you won't think hard of me for leaving you this way, will you? Do whatever you like with the furniture. I don't want it, or any of the things you gave me. Good bye, for the last time. I thank you for all your kindness to me.

Once your own LISA.

And beneath the signature there was a postscript, evidently an after-thought to set his mind at ease should he doubt her fidelity.

"The engagement I had for that evening, which I spoke of the last time you called, was with a priest. I went to him with Susie, and he told me about the order of sisters. That was all it was."

VII

DAFFODIN dined twice a week at his

club now—actually dined there. He had been doing it for three months, and making the announcement over the breakfast table, just as in the past. The going away of Lisa had broken him sadly, but he had fought a good fight, and he had conquered. The season of delirious blisses was ended and put resolutely behind him, and for compensation he was rid of the prickings of conscience.

He was one of the club's board of governors. He had been one of them when Tom Gerould was proposed for membership, and, burying his lingering animosity, he had voted for him. He had made his admission possible. For, after all, Tom had proved himself a good fellow. He hadn't tattled.

And then, one evening, the brothers-in-law met in the club restaurant for the first time since that trying hour in Gerould's office. They met and they dined together.

It was not, however, until the liqueurs were before them that any allusion was made to the past. Then it was Daffodin who reverted to their last meeting.

"Tom," he said, "I've never thanked you for your forbearance. I want you to know, though, that I appreciated it—that I still appreciate it."

The younger man was silent for a moment. It was evident that this voiced gratitude had taken him unawares.

"I don't think you owe me anything of that sort," he said presently.

"On the contrary," returned Daffo-

din, "I really owe you everything. You may not know it, but I went through purgatory for a while, following our interview. Later—a very little later—when the young woman you saw the previous evening threw me down with a crash I nearly went to pieces. But, throughout it all, your sister was a brick. It was her unwitting sympathy that bore me through. If you had carried out your threat I should have been a thousand times worse off. I tremble to think of what I might have done."

"Still," insisted the other, "I must repeat that you owe me nothing. I carried out my threat to the letter."

Daffodin knocked over his *grande marnier*, spilling it on the cloth. His hand shook so.

"Good God!" he murmured.

"To the letter," Gerould repeated. "I told Emily everything that very afternoon."

"She wouldn't believe you?"

"Oh, she believed me all right. It wasn't that. But it wasn't news to her. In fact, she knew more about it than I did. It seems she had known it from the first. It had reached her through one of her women friends, who had got it from her husband."

Daffodin repeated, "Good God!"

"Her complacency was astounding to me. She seemed not to blame you in the least. Daffodin, your wife is one woman in a thousand."

The husband stared dumbly with unfocused eyes.

"One woman in a thousand," he echoed in a whisper.



WOmen are never satisfied unless you tell them how admirable they are. Men are never satisfied unless they can tell you how admirable they are.



SOME people think a conversation means they should tabulate their love-affairs.



A TRAGEDY

By Elmore Allen

ONCE there was a lady who was full of good works. She was stout and had a plump soul that yearned to uplift the downtrodden. She gave away huge sums of her husband's money. She provided cats with artificial limbs, plumbers with the Encyclopædia Britannica, stranded chorus girls with cotton stockings and common-sense shoes, and the Ladies' Forum with articles which her secretary wrote. She had children in fits of absent-mindedness and was perpetually surprised at their existence. Her picture went in the paper along with President Wilson, Mrs. Vernon Castle, Harry Thaw and Billy Sunday.

Then, while planning a home for fallen caddies, she died.

St. Peter opened both gates when she arrived.

"Where are the slums?" she inquired breathlessly.

The Saint did not answer her, for he was very busy examining the credentials of the people who followed her.

Once installed, she tried to form a school for seraphs, an association of angels, a club for little cherubim. It didn't work.

Then she started for the slums.

She hunted for several æons.

No one seemed to know where the slums were.

At last a sweet-spirited angel took pity on her.

"There are no slums," it said.

The awful truth almost knocked her off her wings.

Broken-hearted, she wept.



DANDELION

By John Russell McCarthy

A LITTLE yellow poet
With just one book of songs:
White songs, airy things
That float upon the wind.

O, little yellow poet,
How is it you can dream
A thousand fairy lyrics
And sing them as you die?



ENGLISH SOCIETY AND THE AMERICAN SNOB

How American Climbers Angle to Enter the Charmed Circle

By a Former Member of the British Parliament

I

King Edward VII and His Court

IT is remarkable what pains ladies will take to get into English society (with a capital S)—especially foreign ladies, and more particularly, again, American ladies.

For tricks, subterfuges and conspiracies to attain that end, the palm must be awarded to those members of the fair sex hailing from the land of the Stars and Stripes. Sometimes they succeed in “putting it over,” but they quite as often fail, and that with most lamentable consequences.

The court of King Edward VII (as a contrast coming after the austere times of Queen Victoria) had a glamour about it which was peculiarly attractive to Americans—indeed, it was bruited abroad that the King himself had sufficient good taste to display friendly feelings towards several fair notabilities from the Western side of the Atlantic. It was, therefore, thought that what was easy for some could not be difficult for others; but in this belief there lurked the direst danger.

A lady who had a rude awakening in this regard was Mrs. Foote-Livermore. She was in the best set at home, but was convinced that to be “presented” at King Edward’s Court was to have a social distinction conferred that would be an entrée into any society the world over, and especially would make

her fashionable sisters in Boston green with envy. It is wonderful what satisfaction the discomfiture of rivals brings to the breasts of the best of lady friends!

Mrs. Foote-Livermore, therefore, came over from Boston to England with a plethora of money, experience (of the U. S. A.), and self-confidence. She had brought with her a really charming daughter who, she was determined, should not only make her début at the Court of St. James, but should take London by storm as being *the débutante* of the season. Why not? The daughter was very wealthy, very beautiful, very lithe, and withal very graceful. Besides, there was ample time, as it was only February, and the first of the four or five courts held during the season was not for some six or eight weeks.

Mrs. Foote-Livermore had introductions to the American Minister in London (the position was not that of Ambassador at that time), and there came her first disappointment. She was certain that if she saw him he would fix it up for her. Unfortunately he was on the sick list, and she declined to confide in either the First Secretary or in the Chargé d’Affaires; she would find some other way. But what?

Then commenced the scheming: how was it to be accomplished?

She had sufficient nerve—in fact, she was quite capable—to go to Bucking-

(AUGUST’S NOTE: Some of the names mentioned herein are necessarily fictitious, but the incidents are founded on fact.)

ham Palace and there tackle the King himself. She felt, from what she heard of his Majesty's courtesy to the fair sex, that, if she once saw him, she would be so charming to him that he would at once grant her heart's wish. Then she discovered that, to obtain an audience, the primary necessity was to be on the Court list as having been previously "presented"! And, as if that were not enough to damp her ardor in this respect, King Edward was out of England—at Biarritz!

Although grievously frustrated in her hopes, this did not take away her courage. On the contrary, the obstacles she had met seemed to make her more determined that her object in coming to Europe should succeed. So, remembering the story of Mahomet and the Mountain, as the King was at Biarritz, she would go there.

She did: she and her daughter; she counted on staying at the same hotel as that patronised by His Majesty, and that some happy chance would bring the opportunity. Another disappointment, however: on arriving at the Négressee station at Biarritz, no one could tell her at what hotel the English monarch had "descended"; her man had asked all the porters of the hotel motor-omnibuses with no result. Taking the matter into her own hands, she herself went to the chef-de-gare, and then discovered that *Sa Majesté* was domiciled in a private villa!

She had a shock. Mrs. Foote-Livermore was still game, however. She decided that, all the same, they would stay at Biarritz; for might she not, perhaps, come upon the King in his promenades, or even at the Cercle? The idea of addressing the King even then would not occur to an inhabitant of the British Isles, who is imbued from birth with a sense of the strict etiquette hedging around Royalty; if he were "in" Society, he would know how to respect the King's privacy, and, if he were not, he would keep at a safe distance. Mrs. Foote-Livermore did not understand it this way—and she possessed the indomitable enterprise of an

American—and then, there was her daughter's future acting as a beacon!

One morning she espied the King passing the hotel window on the sea-front. It was early, and there were not many people about. She was not dressed, but her daughter was; so, with quick decision, she told her to endeavor to meet the King, either by overtaking him or as he came back, and there and then ask him if he would please write in her autograph-book! The mother thought that would be a splendid opening, and more might come of it.

But the daughter said:

"Mother, I haven't got an autograph-book!"

"What does that matter? If he consents, we will soon get one!" answered the practical mother.

The daughter dutifully did as she was bid, and subsequently reported that, while at first the King was a bit startled at seeing a stranger accost him, he asked her name and where she was staying, and promised to send his equerry.

Mrs. Foote-Livermore was excited all day: "Now, everything would be all right! She would get the command to attend the Court!"

But Mrs. Foote-Livermore should not have so hurriedly jumped at conclusions; the King had not given an actual promise to put the magic signature "Edwardus VII, Rex et Imp." into the young lady's book of autographs: he had only said that he would send his equerry. This, however, was ample for her; the poorly equipped shops at Biarritz were searched, and the most expensive book was purchased.

After lunch the ladies dressed in *toilettes de circonstance* and waited expectantly, in the salon of their apartment, the coming of the equerry.

Colonel Sir Stanley Clarke was the equerry at the time, and when, at three o'clock that afternoon, he was announced, both mother and daughter's hearts were in a great flutter. In most delicate phrases the polished old courtier said that His Majesty did not seem to remember the name of Mrs. Foote-

Livermore; had she or her daughter been presented at the Court of St. James?

The lady could do no other than admit that neither she nor her daughter had received that honor; so the equerry gently conveyed to her that His Majesty only wrote in the autograph-books of his friends; and that, as Mrs. Foote-Livermore had not been "presented," the King hoped she would understand—

Here was a blow! It is true that the tone of voice in which it was delivered was almost confidentially-sympathetic; but still—it was a blow!

Mrs. Foote-Livermore, noticing that the equerry was *so* considerate in his manner, thought that as a *pis-aller* she might be doing well to confide in him that her very object in coming to Biarritz was to obtain an invitation to one of the coming courts for herself and daughter; adding that, if such a consummation could be arrived at, the honor and pleasure it would confer—

But Sir Stanley Clarke shook his head and, to their consternation, said:

"That will be impossible now. His Majesty is of a most kindly disposition, and is happy when he is able to show it to members of the great American nation; but he is most strict on breaches of etiquette."

* * *

As an epilogue to the foregoing, it is said that Mrs. Foote-Livermore and her daughter returned to America by the next available boat, and that they started from Havre—thus avoiding London and any bitter memories it might have for them. And in this, perhaps, they showed wisdom.

II

The Coronation of King Edward VII

THIS was to be the function of the Century! and American ladies were simply falling over each other in their excitement and endeavors to get there.

Great and brilliant as were the festivities arranged for in connection with this monarch's coronation, as is well

known they were all suddenly postponed by the unexpected announcement that an operation for appendicitis was to be immediately performed on his august person. As this information was given out only on the afternoon prior to the day fixed for the fête, the anxious discomfiture of everybody interested was comprehensible—to some American ladies it almost took the form of a disaster.

The King himself, when Prince of Wales, had often remarked to his intimates (in that softly guttural voice of his which was the only indication of the Saxe-Coburg taint in him) that, seeing his royal mother reign so long, he did not believe that he would ever live to be crowned; and now, as this illness came upon him, it was only natural that he saw in it the finger of Destiny pointing to the bauble being snatched from him when almost placed upon his brow!

London was, of course, crowded to excess; it was fuller than usual with fair dames from the United States, and, intense as were the heartburnings at the postponement among those of them who had been favored with "commands" to the ceremony in Westminster Abbey, greater still was their anxiety lest it might now be fixed for a date when they would not be in Europe—and this, too, after many strenuous efforts made to secure the coveted invitation!

The postponed function was subsequently arranged to take place early in August. Now, to two ladies from New York, the altered dates came very agreeably, inasmuch as they had arrived in London only a few days before that for which the coronation was originally settled; and at so short a notice, they had been unsuccessful in obtaining a "command."

The ladies were distinguées and smart. One (Mrs. Madge Tomlinson) was the wife of a financial magnate; and the other (Miss Doris Bentley), who traveled with her as her friend, and, it might be said, under Mrs. Tomlinson's chaperonage, was also pos-

sessed with a sufficiency of the world's lucre.

Matters thus turning out in their favor, they set about at once carrying out their plans. As they were both persons of some social distinction at home and leaders of a certain coterie, they could conceive of no reason why they should not be eligible.

Like all good Americans, they immediately began to worry their Minister. They called upon him the next day, and they were received with all the courtesy due to them. The Minister promised that he would personally see the application went forward, and he did not doubt that the reply would be favorable, if there still were any vacancies.

"If—?" the ladies enquired, raising their carefully penciled eyebrows.

"Yes," answered the Minister. "I have heard that there is a large list of names which were crowded out of the original date, and, presumably, those would be considered first. However, so many will now be prevented attending, that you must not give up hope."

They did not "give up hope"; but, as weeks went by and the "day" was fast approaching, they began to get anxious. The American Minister was again and again pestered by them; but he regretted he could do no more, and advised further patience.

"Patience"—indeed! Until when? Until after the ceremony, perhaps? No; something must be done at once. There was no time to be lost in playing "patience!" What could they do?

Ah! They would see the Duke of Norfolk; he was the Court official who had all the arrangements in hand and possessed supreme power. Why had they not thought of that before?

They were not long in discovering that he lived in his mansion in St. James's Square; and off they went there as quickly as a taxi could take them. From the Carlton Hotel, where they were staying, it was only about forty yards; but they did not know that, and so they were scarcely in the cab before they were out of it and

standing before the stately portals of the Duke's abode.

"Is the Duke at home?" asked Mrs. Tomlinson.

"No, my lady," replied the correct liveried servant. "But if your ladyship will leave a message—"

The financial magnate's wife was not aware that servants in a ducal mansion always presume that a lady (and dressed as one) who desires to see His Grace, is the possessor of a title herself, and is so addressed. She, therefore, felt inwardly flattered at being taken, as she imagined, for some peeress of the Realm; and, not wishing to undeceive the servant, she replied with as nonchalant an air as she could assume:

"No; I have no message. Can you tell me where he is? I wish particularly to know."

"Yes, my lady. Your ladyship will probably find His Grace at the House of Lords."

"Thank you." Her bosom swelled with such pleasure that she was about giving him a gold coin; but she was restrained by her companion. "We will go there."

"Shall I call your ladyship's car?" asked the magnificent servant.

"N-o-o! Thank you." They turned on their heels and walked a few yards until they rounded the corner, where they stopped a taxi and ordered to be driven to the House of Lords.

They went upstairs to the Lobby of the Gilded Chamber, and, being asked by a stalwart constable what he could do for them, said they wished to see the Duke of Norfolk.

"Does your ladyship require seats for the Peeress's Gallery? There is a debate on, and I can take your ladyship's card to Captain Butler, the Deputy 'Black Rod,' my lady."

The same presumption as to ladies who come to the House of Lords possessing a title, is held by all the attendants in those precincts as it is at a peer's residence—on the principle, perhaps, that it is better to give a title where none is due than to omit doing so where it is a right.

Mrs. Tomlinson liked being so addressed, and said to herself, "I guess I must strike them all as being a replica of a British aristocrat." But she remembered why she was there, and, handing a card, said to him:

"No; I do not wish to listen to any debate. Just you give the Duke that, my man, and ask him to hustle!"

The constable eyed her askance, and gave her card to an attendant, who disappeared with it.

Among those crossing and recrossing the Lobby they presently noticed coming toward the constable a sturdy man, about 45 years of age, somewhat below the middle height, and wearing a jet-black bushy beard like a smith's; he whispered something to the constable.

The bearded man then walked toward the ladies with an alert step.

"You wish to see me?" he asked.

"Oh, dear, no!" Mrs. Tomlinson laughed. "I guess you don't want to say you are the Duke, do you?"

"No; not particularly," he answered, with a merry twinkle in his eyes. "But I can't help it."

"Help what?"

"Help being born to it."

Mrs. Tomlinson gave a jump.

"Sake! you don't say!" she exclaimed. Then she put her arm through his and moved away with him. "Pardon me, Duke; I had no idea!" Then, confidentially: "Now, Duke; what I want is this—" and then she poured into his ears all she had to say.

Now, the Duke of Norfolk is not only the premier duke in the land, but he is a most brilliant man; and the American lady's familiar way of buttonholing him appealed to his sense of humor, and he let her rattle on. He was amused at her tremendous volubility, and, when she had finished, he had already come to a decision.

"The demand is enormous—"

"Oh, I know; but, Duke—" she interrupted, not wanting to hear him decline.

"It is enormous," the Duke repeated. "But I just remember there might be two—they will be in a box with other

ladies; you will have no objection to that?"

"Oh, Duke, you are delightful! Do you know, I feel just inclined to hug you right here!"

"Pray do not do that!" he replied, with a playful smile on his face. "I have only been married a few months, and the Duchess might object!"

There was discreet laughter and some handshaking, and then Mrs. Tomlinson and Miss Doris Bentley went out into the open, with a feeling of happiness and as if they were walking on air.

On the great morning, the time fixed for them to be in their places in the Abbey was very matinal; further, in order to get through the crowds it would be necessary to start even several hours earlier than that; so visions arose before them of being compelled to swallow a simple breakfast and then of famishing for the rest of the time.

Their luck was still in, however, for they had made the acquaintance of a Member of Parliament, and one of the privileges of that position is that he can use certain dining-rooms in the House for any guests he cares to ask. So he invited these ladies to join his party at breakfast on this fête day. The access to the Parliament Houses had been secured and the crowds could be avoided, by using a special entrance from Westminster Bridge, which was kept clear by the police for Members and their friends, Westminster Abbey being contiguous to the Houses of Parliament.

Thus they witnessed the historic event of King Edward VII.'s coronation in every comfort.

It was a peculiar thing, however, for it to be rumored that the box where these American ladies sat in Westminster Abbey was filled with the personal friends of the King; amongst them was an actress (of some celebrity, beauty, and mediocre talents), a certain peeress, and others on the private waiting list of His Majesty.

That some people called it the "loose box" might have been done either out

of spite, or in a spirit of fun; but, whatever it was, the Duke of Norfolk was certainly innocent; for his duty expired when the majority of the seats were handed to the King's equerry to deal with as His Majesty instructed.

It is possible that Mrs. Tomlinson heard of this. In any case, it is a remarkable fact that now whenever this lady notices a conversation is turning toward horses she hurriedly switches it on to motor-cars or any other convenient topic. One would almost think that she recognised that from horses to loose-box is a natural transition, and the possibility of it looming large in a spirit of banter amongst her friends gives her an involuntary cold douche.

She would much like to speak of horses *qua* horses, and her friends know it. Many in her set remark that since that epoch-making trip to Europe the equine race is taboo to her, and that she declines even to go to a horse show; they even express their wonder, perhaps a little maliciously—as if they knew!

III

The "Getting-in" of Mrs. X—and the "Getting-out"

THE story is often told in London of the extraordinary efforts of one American lady, who had better be referred to as Mrs. X (on the charitable principle to let "X" be the Unknown Quantity) to get willy-nilly into the right set of Society.

Mrs. X was about thirty-five years of age, imposingly beautiful (as are so many American ladies), rich, and knew how to wear her frocks; but with a will and a manner that were decidedly aggressive—as that word is used to designate hasty resolution and energy. She had left her husband behind in the U. S. A. (as do also so many of her class), and was accompanied by a French maid.

There was no sort of half-measures about Mrs. X; she had decided that English Society would just *have* to receive her, and that was all about it. Money, she said, would do it; and, as

she had a sufficiency, she determined to burn as much of it as was necessary to attain her object.

She had somewhere heard that to have a box at the Opera for the season was a good thing; she was in time to secure one of the most expensive that were left, and was gratified to see in the newspapers that her name figured as a subscriber amongst the best in the land. That was a start; but it, of course, brought no invitations. So she made another move.

She rented a furnished house in a street off Berkeley Square, which was a happy inspiration had it been properly worked. She paid for an announcement to appear in the *Morning Post*, stating that

"Mrs. X, wife of the millionaire proprietor of the celebrated Non-Such Department Stores of New York, has arrived in town, and has taken the residence of the Marquis of Ballater for the season. It is the intention of Mrs. X to entertain on a lavish scale during her occupation of the mansion which, in itself, is a land mark of Hill Street, Berkeley Square."

Required some nerve—what? She counted a great deal on that concluding statement, and imagined that it would bring some sort of response—if only one, and it was of the right kind, it would serve as a nucleus for others. And it is true that the next morning her letter-box contained twenty-four letters; but alas! as she opened one after the other with feverish anxiety her disappointment grew in crescendo-like proportions, for their contents came only from tradespeople desiring the honor of her custom for milk, bread and other household necessities.

She then turned to *Debrett's Peerage and Baronetage*, and, with a courage born of desperation, carefully selecting forty-eight names, she sent invitations to dinner to each of them for a certain date. She had replies from all, mostly written by the respective secretaries; but each regretted that "a previous engagement," etc.—and that was six weeks ahead!

She was smart enough to understand

that she had been snubbed—cut dead with no uncertain hand! The blood suffused her cheeks as each polite “regret” pierced her pride like the sharp point of a stiletto; but these pricks she resolved to accept as part of the game and to treat them as not having penetrated the skin to any serious extent.

Her maid condoled with her, saying “Ah! si seulement on avait dit que c’était pour entendre Caruso—!” And Mrs. X then recognised that she would have stood a better chance had she put in the corner of her card “To meet Signor Caruso.” But it was too late now; she had played a great card, and had lost; it seemed to her, however, that the pack might still contain a trump—if she could only discover it!

She was in this mood when Mme. Amélie (“Modes, Robes, Chapeaux,” etc.) called upon her by appointment. Mme. Amélie was a fat little woman, very active, was really a Mrs. Fanny Clarke, who had once been on the stage, but had never been to Paris in her life. Some scion of the aristocracy had put her in business and, as she had a deal of natural *chic*, it was easy for her soon to get together a high-class and fashionable clientèle—thus, Mrs. X had heard of her, and hence she requested her visit for some special order.

It was then that Mrs. X’s brain proved its receptivity of a sudden impression; perhaps the dressmaker could suggest something; she was in touch with a great many of Society people and probably knew their foibles: she would try her. No sooner thought than done! She confided in Mme. Amélie, and Mme. Amélie confided in her. Yes; *perhaps* a certain peeress, who had lost heavily at bridge a few days ago, *might* be induced to take Mrs. X under her sheltering wing and chaperone her into the Social set.

“How can it be done?” Mrs. X asked anxiously.

“Well—” hesitated the other.

“Is it a question of money?” Mrs. X brought matters down to a practical issue.

“I think her ladyship would be happy

to make up her losses,” Mme. Amélie replied. “But great discretion must be used.”

So an “accidental” meeting was arranged at Mme. Amélie’s shop in Bond Street; and there the introductions took place; but not a word about money was mentioned, the modiste having strongly enjoined Mrs. X to leave those details to her.

If the truth be told, Mme. Amélie was lying; the peeress had lost nothing at bridge, but she was indebted to the fashionable dressmaker herself in a large sum, which, it was agreed with her ladyship, should be wiped off (with Mrs. X’s money) on her ladyship consenting to “bring out” the American beauty and get her presented at Court.

There was now no further hitch: the peeress was thoughtful enough to make enquiries about Mrs. X, which were satisfactory, and Mrs. X duly paid Mme. Amélie the full amount of her inflated bill against her ladyship. Indeed, there arose between the peeress and Mrs. X the commencement of a friendship which might have developed to larger proportions had it not been for an unfortunate *gaffe* committed by Mrs. X.

She had been to Court that afternoon with the peeress, and returned to Hill Street in the happiest of moods. She had asked two young Americans to dine at her house, and, of course, the talk was of the function she had attended. She was still under the influence of the glamour and brilliancy of the Court ceremony, and had kept on her “presentation” gown just for the pleasure it gave her to strut about in it.

She confessed to them that she felt as if she would like to “finish the evening somewhere.” It was past ten o’clock even as she spoke, and they suggested that, as they were going to the masked ball at Covent Garden, she should accompany them. She objected that it would take her time to change into an ordinary evening robe; but they said she was to come as she was, adding that it would make a sensation.

They were right: it did!

She had fallen into their plan with gusto. Unfortunately for her, the fact was brought to the notice of the Lord Chamberlain; it was considered so great a breach of etiquette that an intimation was sent to her that her name was erased from the Court list.

Thus, after having with strenuous efforts gained an entrance into English Society, were the gates closed against her in such a definite manner as to render any idea of subsequent revision hopeless indeed!

IV

There Are Others

THE number of American ladies who have married into the English nobility is large; and, of course, the circumstance of getting a live lord for a husband gives an immediate entrée into Society circles.

Several could be mentioned who would probably have achieved the object without going to the extremes of espousing a lordling. The lady who is now the Duchess of Marlborough would have done so because of being the daughter of W. K. Vanderbilt, a millionairess, a tall and very beautiful woman, and certainly an acquisition anywhere.

That she married the Duke in 1895 is an incident in her life for which, at times, she has been known to express regret. Whatever the cause for the estrangement between them is, the Duke (who has an engaging personality, but is small of stature) has "made good" during the war. He has been mentioned in despatches, and has borne himself in a truly gallant manner, showing a courage and bravery under fire that have given heart to the troops he led.

Whether it was the taste of the Duke or of the Duchess to build the mansion in Curzon Street known as Sunderland House, is beside the matter; although it may be said in passing, that an uglier building could not have been conceived: a large square edifice, with no architectural beauty, reminding one

of a local town-hall or an immense mausoleum.

Another American lady who married a lord (although only by courtesy was he so termed) is she who was so long known as Lady Randolph Churchill. She subsequently, after a reasonable widowhood, wedded Mr. George F. M. Cornwallis-West, belonging to a collateral branch of Earl de la Warr; but evidently a short spell of married life with him was sufficient, for she divorced him on account of the attentions he paid to another lady, sometime in the year 1913; and shortly afterward he married Mrs. Patrick Campbell, the actress. Lady Randolph, during her first husband's lifetime, was well received in England, and the friends of her family (nota: she was the daughter of the late Leonard Jerome, of New York) were satisfied accordingly.

The principal issue of her union with Lord Randolph is Winston of that ilk—than whom, as a politician, there is none more erratic, more unreliable, and yet at times more remarkably brilliant. It is to be presumed that Mr. A. J. Balfour (who succeeded Lord Salisbury as Prime Minister, and now is Foreign Secretary in Lloyd George's cabinet) loves this Anglo-American product as much as Roosevelt adores Bryan.

Lord Randolph was a Tory—a democratic Tory, it is true; but still, a Tory—and thus it is to be understood that she espoused her husband's efforts on that side of politics. After her second marriage, however, she entered the opposition camp; and it is strange that not only did *she* use all her influence against those who formerly had her support, but that the aforesaid Winston also had changed *his* coat.

Indeed, her son Winston, from being a strong advocate of the Tory program on entering Parliament, ultimately became a member of a Radical government whose politics he had previously denounced with a bitter virility on every occasion that then presented itself.

Who says there is anything in heredity?

Miss May Goelet with her mother

(Americans who are immensely wealthy) was at Homburg when King Edward (who was then Prince of Wales) was staying at Ritter's Hotel, and she was soon in the set of His Royal Highness.

History does not say by what means she became among the elect as a *persona grata* at the Prince's table; but the mere fact that she was "in" it was ample credential for her to be received in Society and her position recognised.

Although she was far from being an imposing personality, she was certainly good style; and it was not long before she and the Duke of Roxburghe made a match of it. The Duke married her in 1903, and it is rumored that they are still as happy as on their wedding-morn.

Whether the American actress, Miss May Yohe (who made a great hit in "Little Christopher Columbus," at the Lyric Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue) was prompted to throw her cap at that scion of nobility then known as Lord

Francis Hope, in order to enter English Society, is fairly open to doubt.

If that had been her aim, she soon discovered, after being led by him to the altar in 1894, that she had grievously miscalculated; for the doors were not opened to her with that alacrity which is conspicuous to others of her country under similar conditions.

She was a delightful singer of light operatic parts, had a captivating style (witness Lord Hope's infatuation), and possessed a "go" of exceptional interest, and yet—her husband discovered her infidelity, and divorced her in 1902.

And since then Lord Hope's father died, he himself is now the Duke of Newcastle, and she could have been his Duchess!

It can be imagined how many American ladies will exclaim "How stupid of her to give him cause to divorce her! One of the finest titles in the Kingdom, too! How could she?"

But there may be another side to the matter, after all. Who knows? And will they tell?



AT LAST

By George B. Jenkins Jr.

SHE is dead. My wife, the woman who looked after me so carefully, has passed into the great beyond. She spent her life guarding me against sickness, attending to my wants, anticipating my wishes.

No matter how I maneuvered, she was always on the alert, insisting I wear my rubbers if the sky was cloudy, criticizing my cravat, safeguarding my health. She was the one who decided when I should put on my heavy underwear, if the food was seasoned to my taste, if a hat was becoming. She made up my mind in the important matter of clothes, she saw that I wore the proper collar with my evening clothes, that I left unbuttoned the last button of my waistcoat.

She is dead. I think I shall tilt my hat on one side and try to flirt with a pretty girl.



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

By Robert Newton

EVE was sulky. On the floor of the cave were scattered some dry leaves. Outside the wind howled a chilling blast.

A salt tear rolled down Eve's cheek. She kicked Adam's house cat.

It had been an extremely late winter and it had long ago outworn its welcome. Not a blade of grass had shown itself above the hard, brown earth, and at this time the year before the world had been a riot of vernal loveliness, and Adam had begun his Spring plowing. But now the frost was still in the ground, and there was no hint of buds on the fig trees. Here and there a dried leaf hung from a twig and shivered and rattled in the wind.

Adam's house cat slunk closer to the fire and kept a wary eye on his mistress. Even Cain stopped his devilment in awe of his outraged mother.

Eve was mad.

It was Easter and she had nothing to wear but last year's leaf!



THE ONE I SHALL KILL

By John Drake

I NEVER saw the man before.

The woman I am with—

Whose hair gleams like topaz liqueur,
And who has such sombre purple eyes—

Until he came she smiled openly at the men who flirted with her;
But when *he* entered, she touched me with her slender hands and smiled at
me with half-parted lips. . . .

He is the man I shall kill.



ALL moving pictures are educational. They show us how we should **not**
eat, drink, dance, make love. . . .



G OSSIP becomes scandal the moment a woman's name is mentioned.



THE COMMONSENSE OF MONSIEUR LEBEL

By Achmed Abdullah

CONSIDER the man's name: *Paul Marie Lebel*—prosy, simple, home-spun, commonsensical, and throbbing with stout burgess virtues; a name in itself, as it were, a sententious apothegm of the ultra middle classes of that grey old Paris which stretches from the Seine toward the Halles Centrales; a name as representative of that neighborhood as Cadwalader Jones is of a certain portion of Philadelphia and as George Washington Jefferson Davis Tolliver is of the dappled and piebald, though carelessly counted, G. O. P. votes of Sumter County, South Carolina.

Stout and commensensical, too, was Paul Lebel's way of living and of earning a living.

To take again the negative prototype: had he been a native of Braintree, Mass., he would have taken instinctively to clerking in a hardware store; his evening leisure would have been divided between the baseball averages and a few tomes of heavy Chautauqua Kultur purchased on the instalment plan; his mother would have gone in for Peruna and for the feminine pastime known as "plain tatting"; his wife would have presided over the Ladies' Auxiliary of the First Methodist-Episcopal Church and would have revelled in the less digestible poems of Browning, while his son, dreaming of the Big City, would have preferred Henry Clay Frick's autobiography to the high school Moral Reader.

Had he been a native of New York,

he would have had a wife, a bull pup, a second-hand Ford, and no children; he would have been bookkeeper to a Pine Street forecloser of fancy mortgages, and he would have commuted every night on the Six Eighteen in the direction of a semi-detached Long Island villa residence which overlooked a neat network of railway steel, a pile of battered tomato tins, and a neighbor's family wash swinging in the breeze with the pompous baroque dignity peculiar to wet red flannels.

But Paul Lebel was a Parisian. His father had fought for the Commune. His maternal great-great-grandmother had been one of the *tricoteuses* of the Quartier Saint Antoine who marched up to Versailles with the lovely head of the Princess Lamballe decorating the business end of a pikestaff. So he brooked no master except the duly appointed bureaucrats of the Republic and was an independent merchant who lived at the back of his six by ten shop in the Rue de Turbigo.

There he specialized in the edible variety of the genus Snail—an animal best served with cream sauce, chopped parsley and a dreamy spring whiff of garlic; an animal not as vivacious as the mussel which is dragged up from the slimy black river bed of the Seine, nor as elusive as the lark which is slain in the forests of Fontainebleau; thus an article of commerce more sane, less risky, and the financial standby of the widowed Monsieur Lebel and of his only child, Julianne.

Julienne had reached the delightful age of seventeen. She was small and

round and quick; her hair was as russet as a winter apple and flecked with tiny points of gold; her eyes were grey and frank, her forehead low and broad, she had the whitest teeth in the world—and she was in love with Monsieur Hector Epernan, the headwaiter of the restaurant *La Croûtte*, just around the corner from her father's shop, in the Rue Pirouette.

Hector returned Julianne's love a thousand-fold. He dreamt of the day when she should be his wife. But he, too, was sound and simple and home-spun. He, too, had a hatful of common sense—and it was there that the rub came in.

For while his American prototype would have had a spark in his soul—a tiny spark through which he would attempt, though not necessarily succeed, to move mountains when the right girl happened along—the headwaiter was French; and so he was just a little calculating, very cool and clever, always sousing his hot Latin fancies in a bucket of merciless Latin common sense.

Thus he saw two things.

One was that Monsieur Lebel's tiny parlor boasted neither ormolu clock, nor terracotta bas-reliefs framed in crimson plush, nor Smyrna rug, nor crayon enlargements of ancient daguerreotypes, nor any other such evidence of solid bourgeois grandeur; that Lebel never consumed more than one *apéritif* at the restaurant *La Croûtte*, that he played his evening game of four-hand manille for nominal stakes, and that his Sunday frock coat and silk hat were of ancient if well brushed architecture.

The other was that he himself was twenty-seven, that he had served his two years in the army, and that it was time for him to settle down and to become an independent and tax-paying member of society with a business of his own. And, not far from the Halles Centrales, a little café was for sale. It was the swagger resort of the Quartier; a place famed for its mulled wine, its beef à la Bordelaise, its Norman cheese served with sugar and clotted cream,

and frequented by the hearty, well-feeding green-grocers and butchers and market-gardeners of the great Market.

Nor was the price demanded exorbitant. Thirty thousand francs would cover it—and little Julianne!—he could imagine her behind the cashier's desk, with the sun dancing through the high window in back and weaving fantastic gold patterns in her russet mane—little Julianne, jesting with the customers and taking in the money!

He would speak to Lebel. Perhaps, in spite of appearances, the latter had hidden away a stout wad of savings.

So, on his first afternoon off, he called on the snail merchant, dressed ceremoniously in full evening dress as befits a citizen of France who goes out a-courtting.

II

LEBEL saw. He understood at once, and he was pleased.

For he liked Hector Epernan—and as to his daughter—why, of course, she was young, only seventeen. But seventeen is past the bib-and-gingham period, after all. Seventeen costs money, what with frocks and frills and silly little shoes at twelve francs a pair.

Too, there was that charming, black-haired, plump little Claire Devereux in her two-room flat of the Rue de la Grande Truanderie; a splendid woman who adored him, but inclined to ask for things besides snails. And how was he to choose eternally between his daughter and his *petite amie*? A pair of shoes given to the one meant a scene with the other and vice versa—and the snail trade was not very lucrative—and—

Paul Lebel was like his countryman, the great Napoleon. He believed that attack was the best strategy of defense. He did not wait for Hector to state the reasons for his visit. He waved a pudgy hand benignly and winked an artful, elderly wink.

"Do not say a word, Monsieur Epernan," he said, "the black coat, the white tie, the starched shirt, the whole sympathetic mingling of elegant finery—I un-

derstand! You adore my daughter—and I," here he shook the other's hand, "I am glad of it—by the name of the ten thousand pale-blue rabbits! Marry her, my boy!"

He was about to give his parental blessing and had already pointed his lips to bestow a parental kiss, when the headwaiter regained his common sense. He made a little gesture with thumb and second finger and reinforced the gesture by whispering: "And as to financial arrangements, Monsieur—"

Lebel behaved exactly as if he had received a tragic and mortal shock. He breathed hard. He opened wide his china-blue eyes. He clutched his neat beard with the fingers of his left hand.

"Financial arrangements?" he wailed. "Money—between you, my boy, and me?" and when the other inclined his head he continued in a low voice, "Alas! the snail trade is not booming. It gives me a living—a fair living—I will not deny—but no more."

He paused; then, seeing the look on the other's face and thinking at the same moment of little, black-haired Claire, he continued quickly:

"Monsieur, youth is a golden and brave-clanking thing!"—he pronounced this with the rousing accents of Guitry himself. "Monsieur, I, too, married when I was your age. I married the late Madame Lebel, a woman loyal, handsome, capable—a woman who could stuff the hind-leg of a tender rabbit with truffles and chestnuts and chives in a manner which would have caused the famed chef Joseph to faint with envy! But, Monsieur, I married this jewel of a woman though she did not possess a single centime. I, Monsieur, had a heart—I had courage—I was a man and a Frenchman!"

He did not mention the fact that a massive cudgel poised significantly in the brawny fist of the late Madame Lebel's blacksmith brother had been an added incentive for his marriage. The headwaiter knew it, too, for he was a native of the Quartier and familiar with its gossip and rumors and scandals; but

both gentlemen agreed silently to overlook the omission.

Instead Hector shook his head. He spoke of his ambitions, of the little café. In other words, he demanded a dowry—thirty thousand francs. Otherwise—though his heart was beneath the adorable little feet of Mademoiselle Julianne—*enfin*—a gesture pregnant with regret of the most bitter!

Lebel switched his tactics. He tried the sting of hidden insults, spiced with the picturesque sarcasm of Paris. He mentioned casually that a man who marries for money is a sacred type with the morals of an eel and the sympathetic character of an angleworm—an especially fat and ungainly angleworm! He opined that such a man's heart was a scenic depravity and that his soul was made of brown, squidgy, malevolent mud. He campared such a man to a pig-tailed rat, to a cross between a hyena and a hippopotamus, and also to a cursed cooking-stove—but the headwaiter remained as adamant as his starched shirt front. He, too, had common sense; and so he left Monsieur Lebel, a victim to groping, bitter reflection.

Lebel sighed. His thoughts turned from bitterness to brooding, self-pitying melancholia and presently, as always in such moments, they began to revolve around the memory of Madame, his late wife—around her sterling character, her courage, her massive brain power. If only she had lived to see this day! She would have found a way out of this annoying dilemma—a way to force the mercenary headwaiter's hand!

Lebel shed a few tears. Ah, yes—the late Madame!—he had loved and respected her in spite of the brawny blacksmith brother's persuasive cudgel. During her lifetime there had been no need of any Madame Claire—blonde, or brown, or red-haired. She had been such a sensible woman—thought Lebel—why, she had been the sort to hear the grass grow and the fleas cough: so sharp and keen and clever! There was no headwaiter who could have held out before her superior wit—and Lebel

opened his watch and looked at the little half-faded photograph of her which adorned the inside of the case.

A handsome woman she had been: big and dark and with just that suspicion of pout to her upper lip which gives zest to a kiss. How lifelike she looked—thought Monsieur Lebel, turning the little photograph to the light—with that coil of raven hair above her broad, white forehead, the smile curling the corners of her lips, the small, straight nose with the well-carved nostrils, the merry twinkle in the deep chasm of her eyes . . . and the rope of imitation pearls accentuating the curve of her magnificent, statuesque neck!

He smiled.

Somehow, he could never separate her memory from these pearls. Imitation pearls, imitation jewelry of all sorts, had been her one vanity, her one foible.

He remembered when she had bought her first strand of graded wax pearls.

It had been six months after their marriage. She had been out all afternoon, to a matinee at the Cirque Nouveau. She had returned very late, but she had been so happy and flushed and excited with the drolleries of Foot-Tit and Chocolat, the famed clowns of the Cirque Nouveau, that he had forgiven her on the spot.

Of course he had poked fun at her when he saw the opalescent string about her neck—"imitations!" she had explained. "I picked them up in a little shop on the Rue Saint-Honoré. Twenty francs—cheap, *hein?*"—and when he had replied that twenty francs were twenty francs and that he himself disliked pinchbeck, she had answered that she adored jewels.

"But these pearls are false!"

"And what difference does that make?" she had demanded; "it is not the value which I love, but the beauty, the richness of color and form. They are imitations—good—what of it? You could not tell them from originals, and even the great ladies of the Faubourg

wear them. They keep their real pearls and diamonds in steel vaults"—and he had laughed and kissed her.

It gave her pleasure, he had thought, and so, through the years that followed, she had bought many a piece: imitation pearls and diamonds and emeralds and rubies. She must have gradually spent between eight and nine hundred francs on them—and then an idea came to Monsieur Lebel!

The jewels were upstairs in the garret, in the late Madame's trunk. Here was at least a beginning. He would surely be able to sell them for two or three hundred francs, a sum of money sufficient to give Julienne a trousseau of the finest. The headwaiter would see—he would admire—he would wonder—he would say to himself that a man who could spend so much money on a trousseau had doubtless a tidy fortune saved up somewhere, and since he seemed too stingy to give a fair share of it to his daughter as dowry there was always hope for the future.

He would cultivate a racking cough—complain about his heart—allude to his fear that he was not long for this world—

Ah!—there was still hope. Julienne would yet become Madame Hector Epernan, and there would be an end to the regrettable scenes with the little Claire in the matter of shoes at twelve francs a pair.

*"V'lá les dos, viv'nt les dos!
C'est les dos les gros,
Les beaux—"*

gaily hummed Paul Lebel as he hurried up to the garret, where he found the trunk amidst a dusty litter of broken furniture, and opened the rusty, creaking lock.

The lid swung up and he paused momentarily. This was the first time since his wife's death that he had opened her trunk, and an aroma rose from it—slightly musty, but still sweet—ambered lavender and verbena: the scents which she had loved and used.

Again a warm wave of sentiment surged through Monsieur Paul Lebel. He came near to closing the trunk with-

out searching for the jewels. Then his common sense boomed up massively. There was Julianne. There was Hector Epernan. And there was Claire!—and he groped in the top tray, with a faint rustling and swishing and crackling as his fingers swept through the mass of crushed silk and linen and ribbons and presently he found what he was after: a little box filled to the brim with a shimmering, glittering, coiled mass of many colors—gold and red and white and yellow and blue.

III

FIVE minutes later, he was facing old Monsieur Isidore Carcassonne in his little jewelry shop of the Rue Pirouette.

He threw the gleaming lot on the counter.

"How much, Père Isidore?" he asked, with a happy smile.

Slowly Isidore Carcassonne inserted his magnifying glass in his right eye.

He picked up the baubles one by one, examined them, looked at his customer, examined them again without saying a word and reached for scale and pincers and acid bottle to make certain tests; then he called to his assistant, who was working in the back of the shop, talked to him at length and in a whisper, and finally asked Lebel where he had got the jewels.

"Why, Père Isidore," replied Lebel, "they belonged to the late Madame Lebel. She had the devil's own hankering for these bits of colored glass—"

"Colored glass?" cut in Carcassonne. "Why, *mon pauvre petit*—these are genuine! Every one of them!" and when Lebel, deathly pale, clutched the edge of the counter for support and seemed unable to pronounce a single word, the other continued vehemently, "Yes—they are genuine—and I offer you . . . wait"—he talked again to his clerk, picked up the jewels, held them to the light, measured and weighed and figured and re-figured—"fifty thousand francs!" he exclaimed suddenly, "not a

centime more—and you must give me until Saturday to raise the money!"

Lebel sucked in his breath.

There was a dry rasp at the back of his throat.

Fifty thousand francs!—he understood at once.

His wife—the late respected Madame—she . . . ah—these things had been presents, doubtless from some rich man—she . . .

He picked up the glistening mass—the color-shouting facets seemed to mock him, to jeer at him. He was about to crush them—to throw them away—and then again, as from a great distance, he heard Isidore Carcassonne's creaking voice—"fifty thousand francs! Not another centime!"—and, quite suddenly, he smiled. God be praised, he thought, he was a man of stout, solid common sense—and Madame was dead, and he was alive! And so was Julianne—and Hector Epernan—and Claire, the little black-haired Claire.

There was the future.

"Good!" he turned to Carcassonne, "fifty thousand francs—I accept—but wait, wait!" he picked up a beautiful ring, a double snake with two cabochon emeralds. "I shall keep this ring for myself—there are — ah — sentimental memories connected with it!"—and, after some haggling, Isidore Carcassonne agreed and gave Monsieur Lebel a receipt for the jewels, asking him to come Saturday for the money.

Lebel left the shop, and, humming to himself, with a youthful, springy step, he swung down the street.

Arrived at the corner, he took the ring from his waistcoat pocket and looked at it.

That little black-haired Claire, he thought—always had she wanted a beautiful ring. She would be happy and grateful. She would kiss him. She would call him her little cream-puff, and her little fat adored doggie-doggie—and . . .

"*Scrogneugnieu!*" thought Monsieur Lebel, wafting a tender kiss in the direction of Heaven, the late Madame!—she had been so clever and sharp and

keen. She had helped him during life—and now she helped him even beyond the grave!

And happy, smiling, Monsieur Lebel hailed a passing cab and asked the driver to hurry—"Number Fifteen, Rue de la Grande Truanderie!"

Bon sang!—he was rich—he could afford to loll about in cabs!—and, as the wheels carried him toward the tiny, perfumed nest of plump little Claire Devereux, he thought gratefully of his wife—the late, lamented Madame Lebel.



HOMAGE

By John McClure

THEY follow their steadfast beacons,
All wanderers save me,
Or turn their prayers to Our Lady,
Mary, Star of the Sea.

I follow in all my journeys
The will-o'-the-wisp that gleams
Deep in your dark eyes, lady—
Mother of all my dreams!

They bring red gold to the altar,
They build great temples of stone,
They render to Cæsar Cæsar's
And unto God His own.

I give to God and to Cæsar
What thing to them each belongs,
But yours is my singing heart, lady,—
Mother of all my songs!



THERE is a little devil and a little angel in every wife. The husband gets the devil and the other man the angel.



THE chief use of cosmetics is to make one look as nearly as possible like cold gravy.



LIFE is like a bad actor let loose in a melodrama.



TIMS AND THE LITTLE GODS

By L. Blackledge Lippmann

I

IN the bygone days, in an age of tourneys and of splintering lances, in an age when cabarets and open plumbing were as things unknown, he in whose blood there was a craving for Romance and Adventure would buckle on his good blade, mount his impatient steed and sally forth in search of dragons and of damsels in distress.

Now had you compared Alfred Tims to such a one he would have said: "Aw, say; come off," and have distrusted you straight away and thereafter, as one who sought amusement at his expense.

Yet such he was, for when not actively engaged upon his duties in the vast "Gents' Furnishing" department of one of our great metropolitan stores it was his pleasure to picture himself the principal figure in some scene of splendor or of valor. At such times he was no longer Alfred Tims, but reincarnate as Reginald Van Plumpstead Travers or Beekman Aylestyne, figured not in a society having its nucleus in West 23rd Street, but rather in one that takes motors, yachts, and weekends as matters of course.

Full often through clouds of acrid smoke, he pictured himself upon his full-blooded Arabian (it was coal black and named Araminta) dashing at breakneck speed down the Drive and stopping the terrified horses that seemed intent upon dragging the beautiful Muriel Huntington and her multi-millionaire parent to certain destruction. After he saw himself (as Guerdon Scragg, relentlessly cool detective) enter single-handed into the den of coun-

terfeitors—and then with a start he would leap forward and observe with enthusiasm:

"Yes, sir! The very latest from London. Oh, no, sir, not loud; a bit daring, perhaps; but *you* could carry it off. Our very best dressers are taking them up. Why, I sold one only yesterday to Willie Ranstitter."

Nor was he, in truth, a bad-looking boy; blond, slender and of a cast of countenance that magazine writers delight to catalogue as "open."

Being in the "gents' furnishing," he was able to achieve from the scanty residue of his fifteen weekly dollars "the very latest from London," and his clothes, if not of a surpassing quality, were at least of that cut that is so charmingly pictured in Messrs. Mendenhall's and Berg's brochure on "Hints for the Natty Dresser" section headed "Business, or Informal Morning."

And Alfred Tims was happy. True, there were times usually attendant upon the purchase of a temptingly cut-priced raglan, or an equally attractive sale of neckwear, when the mid-day "steak—an'-mashed—an' coffee" at "Charlie's" dwindled to milk and a bun at the Dairy Lunch, and when bedtime found him the unfortunate possessor of an aching void; but as the poet has observed: "In the brave days when we were twenty-one, we should worry." And two notches in one's belt will work wonders.

Yes, Alfred Tims was happy, and with him were Youth and Hope, those two invaluable roommates. By them inspired, he often told himself that with a little money, a few hundreds, perhaps, he would be able to place himself in a

much better sphere. He could turn his back forever upon the drudgery of the gents' furnishings and afford to wait for the golden opportunity that must of certainty turn up. That it would turn up he never doubted and then, when it did, he would make good. Hard work would bear fruit of prosperity and, who knows but that in a comparatively few years other clerks in other shops would look with envy at his picture in the illustrated papers.

These were, however, but dreams, so that it came with a trebly pleasing shock to find that a long neglected cousin of his mother's had considerably died, leaving him the magnificent sum of three hundred dollars.

This was splendor.

Furthermore, it was success, friends, popularity.

Miss Hagan of the "notions" looked upon him kindly and dropped hints anent a certain flat in Harlem, and some furniture, good as new, that could be purchased for a song. Ted Bosheim confided the name of a sure thing that was certain to finish first on Saturday. It seemed in short that he was a good fellow whose latent worth had never before been truly realized; and Mrs. Brodey, in whose establishment he occupied the fourth floor front, threw out suggestions as to the desirability of an apartment on the third floor at a rental that she gave solemn assurance was nothing short of sacrificial.

But to Alfred Tims such baits were as mere nothings. His chance had arrived and he gloried in it. Not for him the red plush splendors of Mrs. Brodey's third floor, nor the seductive assurance of a certain killing.

No, this should be a nobler field to which he should aspire from the ruins of an unworthy past. He did not at once hand in his resignation, but rather determined to stay on till the end of the month. It would, he said, give him a chance to look around.

In the meantime, however, he would give himself a few of those little pleasures for which he had so often pined.

To this end he arrayed himself in his

dress clothes one evening late in May, and, having swallowed a hasty meal in a Broadway beanery, loitered along Fifth Avenue in much the same manner as did the heroes of his dreams. Around him on every side were the visible signs of wealth, fashion, and beauty and conscious of the impeccable cut of his recently purchased habiliments he felt himself quite in the picture. The light rain of the afternoon had left the Avenue and its cross streets tracery of reflected brilliance, and over Alfred Tims there spread that sense of the nearness of Romance and the reality of the unreal that is inspired in Youth by the greatest bazaar of the New World.

In front of the Waldorf he stopped. It would be here he would linger amongst the men and women of a different world and perhaps be taken for one of themselves. And then, oh recklessness of wealth, he would invest for the first time in an orchestra chair at some popular show. The gorgeously upholstered doorman made way for him and touched his braided cap.

With the air of Prince Otto of Bohemia, Alfred Tims, clerk, entered the lobby, and even as he did so the Little Gods laughed mockingly and led him through the writing room straight into the presence of Romance!

Languidly he glanced to right and left and then—he saw her! She sat (a ridiculously tiny person) in a large chair placed at the base of one of the huge marble pillars. Her eyes were very beautiful (to this day Alfred Tims is uncertain as to their color) and could be seen under the fashionable toque that surmounted a glorious mass of bronzed hair. Her dress was tailor made—and his professional eye assured him of its quality and costliness. In a word, she was the acme of smart perfection.

Nor was Mr. Tims alone of this opinion. Other men observed and admired her, and while the majority confined themselves to glances one in particular passed and repassed, and might have been the victim of a severe cold were one to judge by the little coughs with

which he seemed afflicted when in her vicinity.

Tims was enraged, the more so as he noticed that the eyes he so respectfully admired seemed rather frightened and wandered from face to face in a hunted appeal.

Again the man passed her, and to the watching boy there seemed a sinister menace in the piratical lift of his shoulders as he bore down upon her.

He stopped and bowed and as he did so Tims could see her lips move as they formed a few swift sentences that drew the blood from her cheeks. She gave a pathetic little gasp and drew far back into her seat, and as she did so her eyes called clearly to Tims.

For a little time he stood irresolute, then a sudden dauntless gallantry overcoming his bashful hesitancy, he crossed, hat in hand, to where she sat.

Could he be of service?

She glanced up startled, looked at him and was somewhat reassured.

It was very kind of him, she said, really was in rather a scrape, but a stranger . . .

He stopped her with a gesture before asking if there was anyone he could notify, anyone he could call up for her, or did she want a taxi? He felt that this was indeed as it should be. Once more she looked into his face, only to receive a reassuring smile. Any doubt that she might have felt vanished and she decided to confide in him.

She was on her way home, it seemed, from Miss Hunt's School at Ferrytown-on-Hudson, and was to have been met in time for dinner by one of the girls and her father. But there must have been some confusion of dates or other mistake for they had not come, and she had forgotten their address. And now, to make matters worse, owing to some trouble in the baggage transfer one of her bags had been sent on ahead and in it her purse and ticket.

Alfred Tims became the master of the situation.

"Where are you going?" he asked, "and when does your train leave?"

She was bound for Augusta, she re-

plied, and knew that even the second section of her train must have gone as it was then five minutes over time.

Her remaining heavy bag he gave to a porter, and together they sought the time tables at the information desk. Yes, her train had gone, but another left the 34th Street station at 12:32 and would make good time.

Without consulting her he stepped into a telephone booth and secured for her a drawing-room upon the special. It was then but seven and a whole evening was before them both. Could she, would she, he stammered in his embarrassment, put him further under obligation by consenting to dine with him and perhaps go on to a theater?

She hesitated a moment and then the youth and daring in her nature being uppermost she gave a half defiant assent.

"But I am not dressed," she added. "I can never go in these things."

The implied disapproval of her costume served only to impress him the more, and he hurried to assure her that the clothes made no difference.

"They do, though," she said, and then: "Will you please get me my bag?"

Alfred Tims found the luggage in the check-room and brought it to her, making only a stop at the desk. With it she would have disappeared into a dressing-room had he not pressed into her hand the key to a room and bath that he had but just reserved for her.

Preceded by her bag she left him, a bewitching reality, but when after an interval she returned it was as a divinity in cream and silver. A cloud of tulle floated from her shoulders and in the cleverly massed coils of her hair was the single gardenia that had adorned her belt.

II

TOGETHER they joined the well-dressed crowd that thronged chatteringly toward the café and, undaunted by a very apotheosis of head waiters Alfred Tims secured a table next to a window that looked out upon the Avenue.

Confronted with a complicated array of silver and by the sophisticated mysteries of an ultra-gallic menu he lost some of his aplomb and only saved himself from certain ruin by placing the carte in her hands with a gallant request that she order for both.

It was a wonderful dinner—a poem—a symphony! Course followed course, for urged on by her host, the girl caught his spirit and ordered with all the abandon of her eighteen years. And throughout it all she sat within an arm's length of him, a being of mystic beauty bathed in and blending subtly with the mellow light of the shaded candles. He ordered wine, not because he wanted it (and indeed the bubbles proved annoying at first), but because the occasion seemed to call for it. She took but one glass, and as she sipped she told him of her life at home and at school—of the French mistress who lisped and of the German who was a beast in general. She spoke of dances, and lawn parties and of a myriad of those little things that were the commonplaces of her world and that were as far removed from his as were the stars. And above all she talked as to one of her own caste, and he listened and was content.

Dinner completed, he called for the check and presented their waiter with a tip that surprised even that hardened sinner. A taxi was called and he placed her in it with her bag before rushing back to the desk to secure seats for the play. The orchestra was sold out, and in a perfect whirl of delight he purchased chairs in a stage box.

The ride to the theatre was unforgettable.

The splendid spaciousness of Fifth Avenue and the blaze of light that is Broadway surrounded them and seemed the proper setting for this venture into a new realm. Their wraps checked, they settled themselves at last into their seats and were lost in the delightful excitement of the play. It was, indeed, no very marvelous production—one of those pieces that rage for a season ere sinking forever to oblivion—but for both of them it was pervaded with the

undefinable spirit of their adventure.

During the intermission they joined the crowds in the promenade, chattering light heartedly, and when the curtain fell at last upon the final scene, it was to Alfred Tims as if, in falling, it had shrouded something of himself that was vital.

Throughout the ride to the station they were very still. A constraint had come to both of them, half ritual on his part; and to her, partly protective. It is here that the Alfred Tims of reality fell short of his chimerical counterpart. Had he in verity been the figure of his dreams he would have broken the silence with a very flood of eloquence; have begged the flower from her hair, a ribbon, or a glove, and perhaps—who knows—his arm might have encircled her for a moment as they kissed.

But the Alfred Tims of real life was silent as above all he realized that for this hour at last he was a gentleman and that she recognized him as her equal. He could do nothing that would lower him in her eyes. Somehow he wanted to cry, but he fought back the tears and smiled.

Arrived at the terminal, he handed her bag to a waiting porter and helped her to alight. The languid clerk gave him her tickets and required in return a sum that left a gaping wound in the boy's already shrunken purse. They followed the porter to her car and their last few moments were very formal. He begged that she would take a sum sufficient to defray her smaller expenses on the road, and after much persuasion she consented.

He must, however, let her have his card with his address, that her father might thank and reimburse him. He felt his cards, of which he had once been rather proud (they bore his employer's name in letters rather larger than his own) burn in his pocket. He could not give her one of those, for then she would know the truth, and perhaps laugh. No, she must never even guess his real condition and estate. One of those names to which he was wont to answer in his dreams flashed

into his mind and he wrote it for her with an address on Madison Avenue.

The train drew from the station and was gone. As in a dream he made his way to the street and summoned a hansom. He gave his address and was conscious of the cabby's surprise.

A dim light shone through the transom above the door of the house that he called "home," and as the wheels ground against the curb he gave a little shudder of disgust. Yet about him was still wrapped the mantle of his dream. The cabman paid, Tims fumbled for a moment with the key. That lock always stuck. Once inside he would have made his way along that hall, sickeningly redolent with the stale aroma of many meals, had he not been hailed by a voice from the deep blackness of the misty parlor.

"Oh! Mr. Tims."

It was Mrs. Brodey, vastly apologetic. "Mr. Tims," she said, "it's sorry enough I am to trouble you; and nobody can say as I do bother my gen'lemen; and you particular, who are so reg'lar; but you know how it is, me being left alone after Mr. Brodey, God bless 'im, was took, and with a boarding house like mine, which if I do say it as oughten, I do keep a good, first-class table; and I've bills came in on me sud'dent, and could you let me have next week's board in advance; and ain't it the hot night?"

She stopped for breath, a propitia-

tory smile wreathing her empurpled lips.

Tims pulled out and opened his purse. Only then was he struck with the sad depletion of his little hoard. Only four bills remained, one of them a ten.

"Here," he said, not waiting either for her thanks or his change, and stumbled towards the stairs as one suddenly awakened from a dream.

Up and up he climbed to that little room that crouched beneath the menace of the roof. Once there he made his way to the sole window and leaned far out, and for a space remained with head thrown back, stray locks blown across his forehead.

Below him the street was very quiet.

Then, in this brief time, he saw himself as he was, and the hopelessness of the life that lay before him. He saw himself a dreamer, weak, ineffectual; and realized the vista of weary years that in the end would leave him where he had begun, save only for Youth, which would be flown. And yet he did not rebel. For one night had not the Little Gods taken him to themselves and let him live his dreams, and how many of us can say as much? A distant clock struck the hour and as it echoed and re-echoed across the sleeping city other bells took up the requiem. Far down the street there came the passing thunder of the elevated as he reluctantly drew back from the window. Inside the room all was very black, as, striking a match, he fumbled for the gas.



ROMANTICIST: one who believes Napoleon was a lover, not a general.



THE moment a woman becomes clever she ceases to be beautiful. The moment a woman becomes beautiful she ceases to be anything else.



ALMOST

By Mary Sears

AN unwonted bustle of excitement pervaded the office of the Bleakton Retreat for the Insane. The officials congratulated themselves. They were about to send back into the world a man whose sanity they had restored. So they gazed with fatuous self-satisfaction upon their ex-patient, a shabbily clad little man by the name of Daniels, when he appeared to bid them farewell.

Daniels extended a cordial hand toward the head doctor. "I can't possibly express my thanks for the great service you have rendered me. You have brought me from darkness into light. Please accept this small token of my appreciation."

The doctor looked down at the sealed envelope in surprise. Leaning closer, Daniels whispered:

"Open it only when you are alone."

The doctor nodded reassuringly, pondering curiously upon the unknown gift as he watched Daniels slowly descend the steps and enter a waiting automobile.

The superintendent had left the office and the doctor was alone. Impatiently he opened the envelope, but one glance at the enclosed slip of paper sent him hurrying to the telephone.

"Detain the passenger for the nine-forty-two train!" he shouted at the station agent. "He belongs back here!"

Then the doctor turned from the instrument and tore into small pieces Daniels' check for fifteen million dollars.



A FANTASY

By Bliss Carman

Against the wall of a bright morning room
There hangs a Japanese embroidery.
Upon a background of wrought whorls of gold
Long drooping lines of blue wistaria sway,
While from a pool below white cranes upwing,
Trailing their slim back legs in heavy flight,
Or stand with sleek necks and red eyes to peer
In the pale reedy shallows where they wade.
There, with the fields outside all white with snow,
On many a summer journey have I gone
Through that fantastic golden land of art,
Where color fades not and day never dies,
And the enchanted mind may rove at will,
Exempt from time, with not a heart-ache more.

THE ROOM WITHOUT A NUMBER*

A ONE-ACT FARCE

By Robert H. Davis

CAST OF CHARACTERS

HERBERT HUNT.....	<i>A Bachelor</i>
WILLIE BREED.....	<i>A Husband</i>
ETHEL.....	<i>Willie's Wife</i>
BREWSTER.....	<i>A Valet</i>

(SCENE: *A richly decorated bachelor apartment in Victoria street. Practical doors right and left; center table, containing uncut books and magazines; divan, easy chairs and general evidences of luxury. A bouquet is placed on the center table.*)

(DISCOVERED: HERBERT, apparently fresh from bath, dressed in afternoon attire, with kerchief protruding from his left sleeve; mustache well waxed. He is dabbing perfume on his lapel and behind his ears.)

(ENTER BREWSTER. Stands at attention.)

HERBERT:

Yes, Brewster.

BREWSTER:

Mr. Breed calling.

HERBERT:

(With a gesture of welcome.) In!

BREWSTER:

Very well, sir. (Exit R.)

HERBERT:

(Searching his memory.) Mr. Breed?
Dash it!

[Enter BREED, carrying an oblong cardboard box, which he places gingerly on the mantelpiece. He is escorted by BREWSTER, who relieves him of his hat and cane.]

[Exit BREWSTER.]

WILLIE:

MY SPATS, how are you, Herbert?

*Copyright, 1917, by Robert H. Davis

HERBERT:

Delicious! And you?

WILLIE:

Ripping! But the day is still young.
(Looks at wrist-watch.) Two-thirty
P. M. I loathe getting up in the morn-
ing.

HERBERT:

Have a cigarette? (Offers his case.)

WILLIE:

Oh, MY CUFFS, I never smoke in
the daytime.

HERBERT:

Then neither shall I. (Returns case.)
Be seated, old chap.

WILLIE:

Half a mo'. First I should like to
ask you something.

HERBERT:

Oh, Pro-ceed. If you don't mind?
(Seats himself on divan.)

WILLIE:

It is rather a delicate question.

HERBERT:

Only *ONE*?

WILLIE:

MY HAT, perhaps *TWO*. You won't be bored?

HERBERT:

Oh, no, Willie—because, after all, we *are* gentlemen, and one is never bored by gentlemen. (*They shake hands.*)

WILLIE:

Then you won't object to, let us say, *THREE* delicate questions?

HERBERT:

Or *FOUR*, if they are *very* delicate.

WILLIE:

MY TIE! you are delightful, Herbert. (*Upon further reflection.*) As a gentleman should be. (*They shake hands again.*) Now, Herbert, man to man, and in confidence—where did you spend last Thursday—to be exact, between three and six?

HERBERT:

(*Rises and waves Willie to a seat.*) Be seated, old chap, while I take a bit of exercise and start the brains into action. (*Begins to stroll up and down the room.*)

WILLIE:

Oh, very well. Take your time. No hurry. (*Seats himself.*)

HERBERT:

Thursday. (*Taps his forehead.*) In the afternoon. (*Pauses.*) By Jove, Willie, dash my eyes, I really don't recall. Beastly defective intellect. (*Places his forehead in his left palm.*) Let me think.

WILLIE:

(*Impetuously.*) *MY BOOTS!* *ABOUT* where were you?

HERBERT:

Oh, somewhere *ABOUT* town. I crossed Regent Street once. (*Joyously.*)

Ah! I recall! Isn't it remarkable how it all comes back to me? By Jove, Willie, the mind is a wonderful thing. Just to think that one can think, and that the thought can be marshalled and made to pass before one at one's will, to come to one out of the past, as it were. (*Hesitates.*) Where was I? (*Exultantly.*) Ah! Now I remember. (*Jabs his finger at Willie in ecstasy.*) I was at the Hotel Magnifique!

WILLIE:

(*Pointedly.*) Alone?

HERBERT:

Good Lord, man, one can't remember every little detail! It's quite enough to recall the major facts. The minor incidents are really of no consequence, don't you know—quite piffing, I should say.

WILLIE:

MY VEST, are they piffing?

HERBERT:

Even the mind, you know, has its limitations.

WILLIE:

Quite so. But a question is a question—and, after all, we *are* gentlemen—and for my sake you might make a special effort, old top.

HERBERT:

That's true, I might. Prod me again.

WILLIE:

Very well. Whom were you with? No offense, understand.

HERBERT:

(*Perfectly at ease.*) Certainly not, though you are forcing me to a deuced lot of reflection. It's dashed exhausting to go over the past to the complete exclusion of the future, to say nothing of the present.

WILLIE:

You didn't go to the Hotel Magnifique alone.

HERBERT:

Why?

WILLIE:

Because one never goes there alone.
There's nothing to do there alone. *MY CANE*, do be sensible, old dear.

HERBERT:

(Plunged into deep reflection.) I am trying my best, you know. Wait. (Pauses.) Now it all comes back to me.

WILLIE:

(Excitedly.) Yes?

HERBERT:

I was with a brunette.

WILLIE:

Describe her.

HERBERT:

(In a brown study.) Very tall, very lithe, very stunning.

WILLIE:

(Anxiously.) With a soupçon of a vaccination scar on her left—ahem, ah—shall we, ahem—ah—say arm?

HERBERT:

Good God, Willie, I wasn't there in the interests of the Health Commissioners! And, after all, we *are* gentlemen, *n'est-ce pas?* (They shake hands again.)

WILLIE:

(Very deliberately.) And what was the number of the room you occupied?

HERBERT:

Come, now, that's *so* silly. I'm not a mathematician. Must you know that? Figures really bore me. And besides, my mind was on a more delicate matter. *Comprenez-vous?* (Pokes Willie in the ribs.)

WILLIE:

Do you mind stating whether or not the tall, lithe blonde was my wife?

HERBERT:

(In a state of abstraction.) Oh, she may have been at one time. Who knows? I don't! She never spoke to me of you; but she always was a very conservative creature. (During this

speech Willie remains silent. He then looks at Herbert inquisitively.)

WILLIE:

Go on.

HERBERT:

(Anxiously.) Bless me, you're not angry, old dear?

WILLIE:

MY EYE, I'm delighted! Really, Herbert, you've done me the chummiest kind of a favor and I *am* grateful just between ourselves.

HERBERT:

Oh, I understand. I shan't say anything.

WILLIE:

But you must. I wish you to say something, because I am about to divorce her.

HERBERT:

(Overcome.) What! You don't mean *that*?

WILLIE:

Certainly. To be sure. You see, Herbert, I am deeply attached to Violet Hope, of the Alhambra Revue; and really, Herbert, I do so need your help. *MY MONOCLE*, old chap, you can do me such a great favor now.

HERBERT:

Can I? And how?

WILLIE:

By taking the witness stand. You can give such remarkable and direct testimony in my suit for divorce.

HERBERT:

(Recovering his poise.) Oh, no, Willie. I don't in the least object to *your* knowing all about it, but the public could never appreciate the situation. It isn't done, don't you know, because—well, after all, we *are* gentlemen.

WILLIE:

But your testimony would simplify everything for me.

HERBERT:

Oh, no, Willie. I couldn't throw her

to the wolves. Now, could I? Moreover, she's a charming woman, an agreeable companion, and very well bred.

WILLIE:

Yes, I know she is a charming woman, an agreeable companion, and very well bred, but *MY SPATS*, Herbert, I don't like her!

HERBERT:

Even so, the lady has her friends. And besides, think of me!

WILLIE:

(With finality, looking at the box on the mantelpiece.) I see you are determined to rouse the lion in me. That being the case, I can no longer restrain myself. (Crosses to mantelpiece, secures the box, and returns to center. He opens the box and brings an automatic pistol into view.) This weapon, as you will observe from the printed matter contained on the inside of the cover, is guaranteed—(Crosses to Herbert.)—you may read it yourself—(Both give attention to the cover)—to kill bear, elk, moose and other big game at one hundred yards. Read it. This is not unsupported evidence.

HERBERT:

Quite a marvelous invention. American I presume? (Reading.) "Not only is it a weapon of self-defense, but a deadly firearm for the destruction of all sorts of varmint."

WILLIE:

(With animation.) Varmint—that's the word. Does it say that? (Looks at cover.)

HERBERT:

Yes. And furthermore—

WILLIE:

MY EAR, nothing more is necessary. You are a varmint! *MY PULSE*, you are a perfect varmint.

HERBERT:

(Boastfully.) Oh, well, one must always do one's best. I try not to fail in anything. Striving ever.

WILLIE:

And it's my duty to exterminate you with this weapon—(*Reads the directions again.*)—"which will not jam, get out of order, or clog in its mechanism, and can be fired at the rate of ten shots in two seconds." Now, betrayer, defend yourself.

HERBERT:

(Bored.) Oh, I say, Willie, this is bally rot. What am I to defend myself with? You know, I can't strike you with a table or a chair. You see, I'm unprepared. Furthermore, I don't bear you the slightest ill will. In fact, old top, I rather like you. (*Taps Willie lightly on the shoulder.*)

WILLIE:

Then why this opposition? I ask a very trivial favor and you refuse me. Therefore, there's nothing left but brute force. I wish you to go in the witness box and tell a few simple facts, after which you step down and leave the courtroom—and I'll give you a lift there and back in my car. No trouble at all.

HERBERT:

BUT if I won't go?

WILLIE:

I shall be obliged to abolish you. From one to ten shots will be sufficient—and then—(*gesture of finality*)—the world will know that I have protected my fireside—or my hearthstone, as the case may be.

HERBERT:

(Perturbed.) But think of the awful mess you will make. And, besides, Willie, things aren't done that way any more. Only the most barbaric people—like the Americans or the Turks—lose control of themselves. And, after all, we are gentlemen, aren't we? (*Offers his hand.*)

WILLIE:

(Accepting it.) Unquestionably!

HERBERT:

Why, you'd be the laughing-stock of every club in town if you slew me. So would I.

WILLIE:

(At his wits' end.) But I've got to do something unusual. If you decline to aid me in ridding myself of a very undesirable wife, you force me to a violent act. I am at my wits' end. Do you still oppose me?

HERBERT:

(Folds his arms and looks Willie bang in the eye.) Yes! I resist you with every atom in my entire person.

WILLIE:

Then I shall act accordingly, at twenty-no, ten-paces. (Begins to step off the distance. Lifts his weapon.) MY SHIRT, Herbert, I really deplore the necessity for this abominable act. It is positively disgusting!

[HERBERT, absurdly courageous, stands with his arms folded.]
[Enter BREWSTER R.]

BREWSTER:

Mrs. Breed.

HERBERT:

(Unmoved.) Show the lady in AT ONCE.

[WILLIE becomes nervous, stuffs the gun into his breast pocket, and, turning, faces the right entrance.]
[Enter MRS. BREED R.]

WILLIE:

MY WARDROBE, this is a rum go!
How did you get here?

ETHEL:

(Surveys the scene, catches a cautious gesture from HERBERT behind WILLIE, swings her parasol, and replies calmly): In a taxicab, which I charged to your account. (To HERBERT) How do you do, Herbert?

HERBERT:

Excellent. Never more delighted to see you, Mrs. Breed. Won't you take a chair?

ETHEL:

I think not.

WILLIE:

MY SOUL, and would you mind telling me why you called?

ETHEL:

(To HERBERT, ignoring WILLIE.) I have something to say to Willie that I can say much better on my feet.

HERBERT:

(Bows.) You prefer to be alone?

ETHEL:

Oh, no—not at all. I'm alone too much as it is. Also, I wish you to hear all that is said. (To WILLIE, rather distantly.) How is Violet, Willie?

WILLIE:

(Petrified.) MY HEART, then you have heard! Is that what you came here for?

ETHEL:

Precisely. I wanted Herbert to know just what kind of a man you are.

WILLIE:

But he already knows.

HERBERT:

(As if to withdraw.) If you don't mind, I'll be going. You have made up your mind to say something direct, I can see that.

ETHEL:

It shall be very direct—(disdainfully)—in a roundabout way.

WILLIE:

Don't think of going, Herbert. Presently I shall talk back.

ETHEL:

You shall have an opportunity. (HERBERT makes another effort to escape. ETHEL interrupts him gracefully.) Please. It has been so long since we last saw each other. (Smiles graciously.)

WILLIE:

(With repression.) MY NECK!

ETHEL:

Louder, please. Are you choking?

HERBERT:

(With gesture of resignation.) Oh, to oblige a lady I'll stay.

ETHEL:

(To WILLIE.) And now, my dear, tell me of Violet and her apartment in Kensington and her blue limousine with two men up, and her French maid. (WILLIE glares at ETHEL and HERBERT and remains silent.) Now is your chance to come back.

HERBERT:

They never come back. Ha, ha!

WILLIE:

(With intensity.) *MY LUNGS*, you can't expect the lady under the present discouraging conditions of transportation, with all the bus drivers at the front, to walk to her work.

ETHEL:

Work! (Sneeringly.) And you call that repartee! I'm so sorry for the poor, struggling, hand-made little blond!

WILLIE:

She's not hand-made. She's a pure blond.

ETHEL:

(Disdainfully.) PURE! Oh, Willie, what a marvelous vocabulary you have!

HERBERT:

I really must be going. You see, it's all so dashed personal.

ETHEL:

And interesting.

HERBERT:

Quite. (Seats himself.)

WILLIE:

MY GLOVES, this inquisition—

ETHEL:

Acquisition, my dear.

WILLIE:

MY STICKPIN, one must have some recreation, otherwise one, let us say, expires.

ETHEL:

Then you don't deny that you have installed this Violet as your very own?

WILLIE:

(With an air of independence.) Well, being a gentleman, I cannot dissemble. Y—E—S.

ETHEL:

And your excuse?

WILLIE:

(Proudly.) That I am the captain of my soul— (Loses courage.) Just between ourselves.

ETHEL:

(Crossing to HERBERT.) You have heard the brazen admissions of this great military expert?

HERBERT:

Indeed, yes.

ETHEL:

Will you do me a favor?

HERBERT:

With pleasure.

WILLIE:

MY SOUL, have a care.

ETHEL:

Silence, Captain! (To HERBERT.) Will you testify in the witness box to what you have just heard?

WILLIE:

You wouldn't dare.

HERBERT:

Oh, yes, I dare anything for a lady.

ETHEL:

Thank you, Herbert. (Offers her hand, which HERBERT kisses.) I propose to sue for complete separation.

WILLIE:

Treachery! (Sinks to the divan.)

HERBERT:

Nevertheless, Willie, we are gentlemen.

ETHEL:

(Crossing to exit.) You will call on my barristers?

HERBERT:

Oh, positively.

ETHEL:

So gracious of you. Au revoir. (*To WILLIE.*) Good-bye, Captain. I salute you.

[*Salutes him. Crosses to right exit.*
HERBERT opens door. Exit ETHEL.
HERBERT closes door, comes to center and looks down at WILLIE on the divan.]

WILLIE:

(Stricken.) Scoundrel! You have betrayed me. Traitor!

HERBERT:

Oh, rubbish! Absolute rot, Willie—perfect, exquisite rot! I realize what a good old blow it is to you, but just toss it off. Lie still for a while. (*Pats him on the shoulder.*) Shall I send Brewster to you? Very good man in a crisis. I'm off. Shall he give you a massage?

WILLIE:

(Overwhelmed.) I've had all I want of everything.

HERBERT:

Well, chin-chin. Nothing more I can do?

WILLIE:

Yes. (*Half rises from the divan.*) One thing, if you will.

HERBERT:

Out with it.

WILLIE:

What room did you and my wife occupy at the Magnifique?

HERBERT:

La, la, la-la-la! THE DINING-ROOM! (*Grabs his hat and cane and crosses to exit.*) Ta-ta, Captain.

[*Exits R. hurriedly, cramming his hat on his head.*]

WILLIE:

(*Shrieks and falls back on the divan.*) MY SPATS.

[*Lies there, fluttering like a wounded bird.*]

CURTAIN.



THAT WOMAN

By June Gibson

THAT woman—

The one who smiles at men out of the corners of her eyes and tempts them with her lips—

That woman,

Whose gown reveals the contour of her body,

And whose mouth is red with wine—

I hate her.

I hate her because she is always so confidently what I would give all I possess to be for but one short hour of my life.



THE mob: a gathering of humans who, not knowing what to do, do it as well as they can.



THE KISS

By R. Reiss

A KISS is a happiness which we should always hope for yet never receive. A kiss is the peak of love; the culmination of all the joys of Cupid's darts. Therefore, why kiss? Why destroy the beautiful thrill that courses through our blood even at the mention of the word? If we take a first kiss, the next will not be so wonderful; so why not wait always in delightful anticipation of the initial one?

Kissing is at first a supreme joy; and thereafter it resolves itself into nothing but depreciation. We become unconscious of the subtle beauties of it; perhaps, indeed, no beauty remains after the first delicious peep into Love's stronghold.

It is like everything else in this old world; if we have too much of a thing, it becomes tiresome.

Tonight I am going to take my seven hundred and twenty-sixth.



THE CHILD-HEART

By Margaret Widdemer

I WAS still a child
Till I came to you,
Child-eyes, child-heart,
Child-lips all too true;

I went silently,
With all-wondering eyes—
“She is old,” they said,
“She is grave and wise.”

Now my lips are gay
And my heart untold,
“She is young,” they say . . .
I am old—am old!



DOCUMENT FOUND IN A MIDDLE-AGED GENTLEMAN WITH GRAY SIDE-WHISKERS

By Horatio Winslow

AS softly as an undertaker in a strange church he stole up the car aisle and before I knew it was wedged beside me. Twice he hemmed in a clerical manner, and then, apparently unable to hold the thought longer, said:

"Excuse me, are you a doctor?"

There is always a delicate compliment in being mistaken for a doctor. I was touched.

"No," I admitted with reluctance, "I'm not a doctor: I'm merely the assistant manager of an electrical supply house. But in a way doctors run in our family: my brother is a doctor and my wife's father is a doctor, so, in spite of myself, I know something about medicine. If it's a matter of general health—"

He shook his head for a moment.

Then he brightened.

"But you understand human nature," he said feverishly. "Your face shows that."

Another delicate and irresistible compliment.

I nodded as though I was old Lavater himself and watched him stroke his verdurous cheeks with quick, nervous moves.

"Yes, you understand human nature." His tones indicated a vast relief. "That's why I must talk to you. A clergyman wouldn't understand. A doctor might. Perhaps you're still better. I must tell someone. I must have advice. It's a matter of life and death."

Settling myself into a faint imitation

of my favorite physician I frowned oracularly.

He did not wait for any farther speech on my part, but straightway began to unload the cargo from his soul.

"It is a letter from Maybelle that precipitated the crisis," he began. "It came this morning. It recalled me to the true facts of my position; as you might say, it woke me to reality; it made me realize that I am in so deep that the only way out may be death—suicide."

He paused to stare gloomily at the red plush in front of us.

"I know I should break with Elsie," he said abruptly. "It ought not to go on. Yet Elsie has five children—cherubs all! Take Edgar, for instance"; a thrill pervaded his voice; "Edgar is just turning three. The last time I called Edgar ran up to me and said—"

I coughed and he apologized. "Of course, I shan't bore you with the clever sayings of children, though there's nothing so delightful as the mentality of a child. All I wish to do is to lay before you my personal problem. Now here is Elsie, a widow with these five delightful children, and yet I feel I must break with Elsie. It can't go on."

"Why can't it go on?" I demanded. "If you like Elsie and her children and she likes you, why don't you marry her? That seems simple enough."

I perceived I had been speaking to deaf ears.

Halfway down the car a woman in black with two squalling brats was endeavoring to comfort one with the bottle while restraining the other from a parade of the aisle.

The gentleman with the whiskers was gazing in a rapt way, and as I plucked his sleeve had begun to chirp like a photographer imitating the birdie.

"I beg your pardon," he said, called back to our tête-à-tête, "but children have an irresistible lure for me, especially the younger ones. I love their dirty little hands and their little affectionate hearts and—of course . . . we were talking of Elsie. You say I should marry Elsie. That sounds simple enough, but there are reasons, insurmountable reasons, in fact, why I can't. For one thing, legally speaking, I'm still married to Maybelle."

"Won't she divorce you or won't you divorce her or—"

"Divorce!" He frowned with portentous severity. "Divorce! Break up a home! Break up the most sacred institution in civilized life! You don't know how terrible that seems to me. Divorce is the canker-spot in America today. It's the most revolting institution on record. All my life long I've had a horror of divorce. It's simply unspeakable. Besides, when you say that you show you don't understand Tiny: no, you don't understand poor dear little Bettina at all."

In this welter of names there was no hope of playing the oracle, so I said a little tartly:

"Why don't you explain? If you want advice, why don't you tell your story from the beginning?"

The words seemed to give him relief. "I will," he said, paddling his forehead with a handkerchief, "I will. I'm grateful to you for the suggestion. I'll tell it all, right from the beginning. All about everything."

He crossed his legs.

"It began when I met Maybelle. You should have seen Maybelle as I saw her. She was a vision. She was my ideal of the Perfect Mother: a woman fitted to be queen of a palace with nursery

attached: buxom, tender, maternal. The wife of my fondest dreams.

"Without exaggeration, I may say that Maybelle swept me off my feet. I was thirty-nine at the time and an honored employee of the Home Trust and Savings Company. I loved my work: the word 'Home' on the window was a daily delight to me. I have always been sentimental about a home and what goes with it, and the company specialized in home and family accounts. Our *When Baby Goes to College Savings Fund* was copied all over the country. If I may say so, that was my idea; and *Daughter's Dollar Dowry* and *Baby's Vacation Pennies* were also from my brain.

"I was doing well: a man works efficiently when he can throw his heart into his work, and my heart was in my work because the idea of a home and children—especially children—had always been my guiding star. Respecting this sentiment I had so far carefully abstained from matrimony; wishing first to gather a competence adequate for the rearing of a little brood of—"

I coughed again and he got a fresh grip on himself.

"At any rate, when I met Maybelle I decided to wait no longer. She seemed to be the woman eminently fitted to be the mother of my children. Although not in any sort a ladies' man, I conducted my suit with such ardor that within two months Maybelle was mine. Perhaps she was somewhat influenced by my generous salary and by the fact that I had no living relatives. As to that I cannot say. But she said she loved me and explicitly agreed with all my theories about the home. It was not till we came back from the honeymoon that I found out definitely not only that she had a mind of her own, but that her mind worked very differently from mine.

"She did not want to live in a house or even in a flat: she picked out a fashionable family hotel. But worse than that, she made it painfully clear that in spite of her former protestations she did not intend to be burdened with chil-

dren. Before I could get myself together enough to protest there we were quartered in the Andora with electric elevators and Saturday night dances."

He turned entreating eyes to me.

"Imagine my position. At the boarding-house all the children, permanent and otherwise, had called me 'Uncle George.' There were no children at the Andora. At the boarding-house Mrs. Bender, the landlady, had indulged me in my favorite occupation of putting on screen doors; splitting kindling; repairing windows; and doing all those delightful odd jobs that to a home-lover like myself give beatific happiness. At the Andora all these things were done by a colored janitor. There was not even a lawn to mow, and if there had been Maybelle would have had me locked up in an asylum before she would have let me mow it."

He was silent for so long that I had to nudge him gently.

"Three years it lasted: three terrible years. Three years of work by day and nerve-shattering, senseless frivolity by night. Card parties, calls, dances—Maybelle made me learn to dance—theaters, concerts, lectures, musicales, dinner parties. Three years of it. Then one evening I came home and found Maybelle gone."

"You don't say!" I ejaculated, trying to pulmотор a little artificial sympathy.

He nodded gravely.

"Maybelle was gone. She left a note, somewhat vague, but one gathered from it that she had met her affinity and henceforth intended to live her own life.

"I am sorry to say that my grief over the matter was not unalloyed. I was glad to be able to get back to the boarding-house. I thought I should be able to take up life again where I had dropped it. But I couldn't."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. Things had changed; or perhaps I should say that I had changed. The pleasure of puttering about the house and romping with children again was a gain, but there was something missing. I was restless:

everything oppressed me. After a hard battle with my common sense I ended by throwing up the job that had kept me for twenty years and leaving the city."

"That must have been a wrench."

He smoothed his coat and ran meditative fingers down his whiskers.

"It was a wrench. . . . Even today I don't know exactly why I did it. Perhaps it would have been better—at any rate, I left the company and became what I am now: a traveling salesman for a house which specializes in babies' go-carts. I like it: I do well in it. And we are putting out the finest, ball-bearing—"

It was necessary to elbow him sharply.

"I beg your pardon, of course. Besides, the goods speak for themselves. But now comes the most surprising part of my story: the part which calls for your best counsel. I shouldn't have supposed it possible if day by day I hadn't with my own eyes seen it happen."

He turned on me precipitantly.

"Look me over," he said. "I want your candid opinion. Look at me. Would you say I possessed any remarkable charm?"

From his gray whiskers to his drab-colored clothes and sad necktie I considered him.

"To be frank," I said, "no."

"You don't see anything about me that would make a widow of middle age call me her 'itty-bitty baby'? Nothing to induce a young woman of twenty-three to threaten to asphyxiate herself unless I said I loved her?"

I shook my head with brutal positiveness.

He did not seem offended.

"I expected that answer. Indeed, before I went on the road I had come to believe myself charmless. At the Andora I always sat alone in a corner. When I asked for a dance the dance was invariably taken beforehand. Yet now I am reluctantly forced to admit that I have a charm and that I am attractive to women. They are drawn

to me. It's no use to deny it—it's a fact. It worked out first when I met Bettina.

"Bettina is a large woman: I call her Tiny partly by way of a joke, but I notice that it pleases her. Bettina has two children. There is a sad, wistful note in her nature. She writes poetry for her own amusement, and continuously she is afraid that people do not love her for herself alone. Her late husband was a hotel clerk who passed to the other side as the result of an automobile accident in which he and the hotel bartender and two chorus girls figured.

"Bettina saw me demonstrating go-carts in a local store; made my acquaintance with some casual question and insisted that during my stay in her little city I should lodge at her home. As a reason she alleged that the hotels were disgraceful—a statement I have since found not at all in accord with the facts.

"I took my grips to Bettina's, and that first evening not only made friends with her two darling children, but also I straightened out the sash-cord of the sitting-room window and fastened up hammock supports on the porch. Before the wee ones had been tucked in their down cots I felt she was in love with me. At the time it was a new experience. I didn't know what to make of it. I was astounded. But at last I think I understand. Do you surmise now what my charm is?"

I confessed that I didn't.

He raised his voice in a sort of exaltation.

"I am a Family Man," he chanted, "I am a Family Man. Look at me closely and you will see what I mean. I am a being designed by nature to be the head of a family. It stands out all over me. It would be just as apparent if I shaved and wore red neckties. I inspire trust—I radiate trust. A woman who sees me knows that I can be depended on to keep the furnace going and the hinges of the cellar door oiled. She knows I will take care of the children when she wants to go to a card

party. She knows I will work myself to skin and bones to keep the wolf from the door. In a word, she knows that I am a Family Man. Every motherly woman wants a Family Man, and in the case of a widow who has been unhappily married to some fly-by-night the appeal is irresistible. She wants me at all costs and"—his voice dropped to a whisper—"she gets me."

I remained speechless.

"A month later when I returned to the town Bettina and I were married."

"But you said," I objected, "that you hadn't been divorced."

He laid a pleading hand on my arm.

"Not so loud: please, not so loud. One never knows who may be listening. I wasn't divorced. I wouldn't hurt Maybelle for the world, and besides, I have my principles that absolutely reject divorce and the break-up of the home. Besides Bettina—she thinks—her poetic ideas are such that—the mere suspicion of Maybelle's existence would send Bettina into a condition that I dread to contemplate."

"If you ask me to advise you," I said, "I suggest overcoming your scruples, going back to your old home for a stay, and either divorcing your wife or getting her to divorce you. Probably it could be done without publicity, and then everything would be all right between Bettina and you."

"If it were only as simple as that!" he said, "how happy I should be in spite of my stand on the divorce question! How very happy! But you don't know all!"

He settled himself to continue the story.

"Naturally a travelling-man must travel. I have some twenty-five towns that I make for longer or shorter stays. I'd been married to Tiny for less than a month when I met Miriam—"

"Miriam!"

"Certainly, Miriam. She was engaged at the store where I demonstrated, and the day I met her she was discharged. We encountered just as she was leaving the office after getting her time, and she fainted in my arms. . . .

I called that night. It was the most pitiful case you can imagine. She had one child, a beautiful, silky-haired angel of two years and six months. Her husband had died the winter before of delirium tremens. You don't know how helpless she was. I couldn't withhold my sympathy. A week later we were married."

I gasped but he went on without a quaver.

"Yes, she did so need someone to look after her that I felt then and feel now that I did only my duty. Tiny has a little income and adds to it by writing for a lodge paper but poor Miriam has nothing. I support her altogether out of my earnings and at times it's a job. I never take a sleeper any more; I put up at the cheapest hotels; and I buy my clothes for wear not for looks. But it's worth it."

He became suddenly enthusiastic.

"You should see little Lionel, Miriam's child. He's the sweetest, cutest little tadpole that ever crawled. I think I have his picture here with me."

He pulled out a snapshot of a rather ordinary-looking youngster dressed up to the eyebrows. "And you should hear him pretend to read the paper! It's immense! Simply immense!"

For a moment he was lost in blissful reverie, roused when the offspring of the woman ahead toddled up and demanded a nickel.

The gentleman with the whiskers produced a quarter and had I not looked a fierce negative would have set the little howler on his lap.

After catching my expression he turned him loose reluctantly.

"You haven't the feeling," he sighed. "You don't understand. For instance, you wouldn't appreciate at all my reasons for marrying Lily."

"Another!" I gasped.

He frowned coldly. "I said you weren't able to understand. But if you had been in my position with my temperament and had met Lily—" he smiled fatuously. "Now no one would think Lily could possibly be attracted

to a grave personality such as mine. Lily is quite my opposite. In many ways she reminds me of Maybelle. But while frivolity is the deliberate choice of Maybelle, with Lily it is simple thoughtlessness. She married at seventeen and after her husband had ciggaretted himself to death she was only twenty-five and had four beautiful children. It's a pleasure just to look at them. And she keeps them wonderfully tidy and sweet: it's her single housewifely accomplishment.

"As in the case of the others I saw Lily first at the store where she ordered one of my go-carts. They told me about her there. It seemed she had the reputation for ordering things that she couldn't pay for. Nothing dishonest about it: just the artless way of a child. She insisted that I personally accompany the go-cart: she wanted me to 'explain it.' To make a long story short I saw too late that Lily was infatuated with me. I tried to break away; I even tried to explain—but to no purpose. She called me her 'great big strong man' and two days later she married me."

He pursed his lips judicially. "I think the marriage has done Lily good. She's one of these flyaway characters that need a steady hand and I steady her. For instance—my letters: I write Lily every day and give her the sort of advice that a girl like that—for she is only a girl—should have. Altogether I can say that I have no regrets as far as Lily is concerned."

"But I don't understand," I put in. "If you're perfectly satisfied, what's troubling you? Why not go on?"

He covered his eyes with his right hand.

"Maybelle's letter this morning. . . . And Elsie, Elsie is so obviously the right woman for me, and oh, those five children of hers! You should see them! They'd carry off prizes at any county fair! Take Walter, for instance—"

I diverted the torrent. "Have you married Elsie—yet?"

His face dropped. "The date is set. Invitations have been sent out to a se-

lect circle. And she needs me so! Her late husband pretended to be a night telegraph operator but in reality he was a gambler till somebody shot him. Now Elsie needs me and the children need me. They all need an influence in their lives for good. . . . And yet here is the letter that came this morning from Maybelle."

"What does Maybelle say?"

"It's the first time I've heard from Maybelle since she left. She says she's made a mistake and doesn't want to live any longer as she has been living. She wants to come back and settle down and raise a family. What can I do? What do you advise my doing?"

There didn't seem to be any adequate advice in my repertoire and I admitted it after vaguely suggesting a monastery or an hegira to New Zealand.

The train was slowing to a stop.

"No," he said sadly, "I don't think I could stand a monastery and to go to New Zealand would simply be starting it all over. I'm afraid that—that the only way out is . . . suicide."

"Think it over!" I begged.

"Belleville!" called the conductor.

The gray-whiskered man stood up.

"It's useless. . . . My mind is made up. . . . I get off here. . . . I shall do my duty. . . . This afternoon I shall display my wares at Tatnum and Mc-Goofy's and tonight when all the world

is still, when the little ones are asleep and dreaming of sugar-plums, when Elsie and Tiny and Lily and Miriam and Maybelle—" he choked.

"At any rate I'm grateful to you," he said, swallowing hard. "And perhaps when you read of an unidentified corpse found floating in the river you'll remember what I told you and try to believe that I never meant harm to anyone. Never. I thought it was all for the best. And besides I couldn't help it—I'm a Family Man."

His voice broke.

He shook hands convulsively and started for the door.

I think I should have tried to save him if at that moment the matter had not been taken out of my hands. For the mother in black and her two children were getting off at the same station. As he glimpsed her gathering up her parcels his face lightened and with an energy unexpected he clove his way to the little group. There was a scant moment of introduction and I saw her face brighten with a look that a naturalist might wear on discovering a long-sought but presumably fabulous species. She was radiant. . . .

Ten seconds later with the lady bringing up the rear of the procession he left the train, a youngster in each arm and the milk-bottle in his right-hand coat pocket.



FICITION is full of alliances which, in name, are marriages. Life is full of marriages which, in name, are alliances.



EVERY woman who slaps a man's face after he has kissed her mocks her soul, and she knows it.



ALL love is a sort of heavenly ennui.

THE MORALS OF PITTSBURGH

By a Pittsburgher

IN these humane, hyper-civilized, merciful days of Birth Control and wholesale murder in Mexico and in Europe, morals—in the orthodox sense—mean lack of money.

Pittsburgh has money.

Billions of it.

Which is not to say we have no morals. For we have: they are of the 57-variety which have made us famous—I almost wrote *infamous*—and have given us a permanent place in the sun.

Formerly, we were a sort of nebulous tank-station to even the most highly erudite in things geographic. But our pickles, our coal and coke, our iron and steel, our natural gas and plate glass and our morals have changed all that.

We're now a moving, integral part of the universe. We're known to every newsboy and newspaper reader from the North to the South poles. Let but any of us who have made Pittsburgh permanent appear in character, and, presto! our caperings are wirelessed and wired to the four corners of the earth. Remote peoples come to life and sit up and read and enjoy for the hour the morality they would ape and revel in continuously if our wealth and courage were theirs.

It is an art to live decadently and well and we have become one of the art centres of the world. Ask any of us who pay taxes to up-keep piles of granite forced upon us by an all-too-generous and trumpet-sounding donator of donators.

There was a period, however, when our men wandered far and wide to "smell calico," as dear, outspoken Opie Read says, but today silks in Pittsburgh

are scented just as alluringly as are those of any famous *demi-mondaine* on parade in the Bois de Boulogne.

No longer do our *grandes dames* draw back from the brink of a Thousand-and-Second Night because of the tragic fact that what they wore underneath was *not lingerie*!

Our lingerie is now as frankly lingerie as any exposed in the shop-windows along the Rue de la Paix.

We also import our wines, our hair, our hosiery and our rouges, then why should we not import a mistress or two to enable us to vary the monotony of a one-woman *ménage* and bring us strictly up to date at home as well as abroad.

But in one importation—when Piccadilly was induced to come to Allegheny County—the lady in the case was not Pittsburgh born. A lady born of us would have philandered in a manner more artistic, and Midas, the husband, would in all likelihood have been as gallant as a well-known minister among us.

The minister, in one of those conjugal moments with his wife when frankness is what it should be, gave birth to a *mot* of piquant originality.

Fancy the minister's surprise some weeks later when relaxing a bit among men of his social set—but of other than religious callings—to hear the striking *mot* fall nonchalantly from the lips of one of our gayest young blades: a blade whose attentions to Mrs. Minister were matters of comment to every person outside of the parsonage.

The parson saw a sudden light, but instead of blinding him it made him appreciate more clearly how very fascina-

ting his wife was and how thoroughly a man he, himself, was.

Again, in conjugal privacy, he remarked admiringly:

"My dear, that wag of a Don Juan does get off the most entrancing stories. His latest is—" and the much-revealing *mot* was recounted with all the delicious flavor of a story told anew.

Silvery and spontaneous was my lady's laughter.

Then she met gallantry with gallantry.

Out came her cryptic expression: "Cæsar's wife is herself again. And she has much to thank Cæsar for!"

You see, we're also up in the classics now and banal actions and words are not at all necessary to point a moral or adorn a tale.

For even the daughters of our brewers, our bricklayers and our time-servers invade the most expensive and exclusive schools both at home and abroad.

And although our French is still our French, and must be heard to be appreciated, yet we are not ashamed of it and we practice it no matter what pain it may cost us.

It was in Paris. At the Ritz. One of our dowagers (we have such personages now that we are so ridiculously rich and so thoroughly courageous in our morals) sent for the *maitre d'hôtel*.

It took her nearly half an hour to relate in French what she desired served at a small luncheon.

The *garçon* of *la première classe* listened silently and respectfully, as such finished creatures do, until the dowager had finished.

Then, in perfect English, he ventured to remark:

"Would madame mind giving her order in English?"

Madame, being a Pittsburgher, did mind.

She megaphoned the office for her bill and betook herself, her maids and her dogs to another hostelry where they permitted her to indulge her Pittsburgh French to the height of her folly.

There is another well-known hostess

amongst us. She sprang from the open-hearth-furnace stalk. "Pap" had charge of a set of "rolls" in our pre-Bessemer days when puddling was an inheritance and wages were uncommonly high and eggs were twelve cents per dozen, butter twenty cents per pound and ten cents' worth of round-steak-cut-thin filled the mouths of a numerous and growing family. This hostess was in the habit of lunching once or twice a week at the Woman's Exchange, that exclusive luncheon-room managed and patronized by the cream of us—both condensed and fresh.

Tea was the beverage the lady called for—for no mead bearing a Bacchus hallmark can be purchased at that perfectly proper hennery.

After cleansing with her serviette the crystal and silver placed before her—which cleansing, by the way, is our perpetual tribute to the grime always with us—the lady explored the interior of the teapot.

What she saw therein caused her carefully enameled face almost to cut her acquaintance, and in an indignant, far-reaching voice she demanded of the waitress:

"How *dare* you serve me a teapot with a strainer in it! Remove the pot at once and bring me a perfectly clean one, and if such carelessness ever occurs again, I'll report you to Mrs. —," and she named a world-renowned society woman who was then President of the Exchange, and whose son is well known to the divorce courts of more than one nation.

You comprehend that the rebuking lady's refining process had not yet reached the "tea-ball stage," nor did she ever learn what delightful gossip her perfectly natural ignorance caused.

We're very careful, we Pittsburghers, not to point out each other's *faux pas*... It wouldn't do at all. None of us would be on speaking terms. And to muzzle us would be to strangle us to death.

Our ear-splitting gossip concerning each other never reaches the home-plate except when it's flagrant enough to

merit space on the front page of a "yellow." Then it is received with open arms. For it brings us that for which we are all striving, a reputation. And as we are too true sports to do anything by halves, our reputations, once acquired, never wear off. We see to it that they do not.

"I may peroxide my hair and manicure my nails," raged a stenographer whose charms have held captive for years one of our best-known and wealthiest pipe-line owners, "but, thank God, I'm pure!"

Which means that we Pittsburghers have taken madly to manicuring.

There's a duck of an old stock broker whose private wires reach to Petrograd, to Pekin, to Buenos Aires, and who, every Sunday morning at the hour of eleven, motors from the North Side across the Allegheny to worship the goddess of cleanliness and polish by having his nails done by an houri ensconced in an "office" as luxuriously appointed as the most effete seraglio of the most-effete-Arabian-Nights'-East. And nail-polishing amidst such seductive and secluded surroundings is so profitable that the houri's bank account shows returns from the most unexpected and respectable sources.

We appreciate skilled labor of any sort—especially if the laborer be worthy of her hire.

We're frankly a manufacturing city and we're not ashamed of our machines—and the ladies who run them, provided the ladies are young, luscious and pretty and know how to kiss *à la mode*.

As to their table manners, what have table manners to do with *souper à deux*!

The word *lady* reminds me.

Said a feminine soul to a waiter in one of our most up-to-date cafés:

"Do ladies smoke here?"

"Ladies do, but women don't."

We still have our wash-ladies and our scrub-ladies, but the knight of the corkscrew and the cooler, the all-seeing eye and the closed lips, was not complimenting one of them.

But our intimate breakfasts, lunches, dinners and suppers are not confined to

places publicly billed as serving such "functions."

Our private offices possess all the comforts of hotels—and homes—with-out any of their inconveniences.

As to some of our clubs, it is there our letters and telephone messages reach us. *Chambres particuliers* are what the French, rather plainly, call them.

As to our Social Register, any member of Pittsburgh's "elect" may have his personally carefully censored pedigree embossed therein in the purest of language. We're thoroughly up-to-date in being our own ancestors. The wheelbarrow, the pick, the shovel, the red flannel shirt, the dinner pail and jean pants would not be at all artistic on escutcheons, so we buy whatever foreign escutcheons we can, and when we can find no more to buy—or have to repudiate what we have already purchased—we hew our own escutcheons.

And we continue to wear diamonds at the breakfast table, for we're still hardy enough to look breakfast and husbands and wives in the face in the dull-grey light of our smoky mornings.

And while the ancient luxurious baths of Athenian Rome are duplicated amongst us, in the next generation we hope to make daily use of them. Saturday nights still hold their terror for some of us!

II

LIFE with us is just one affair after another.

One of our silver-toned lawyers has a penchant for stenographers of the youthful, slender, brunette, olive-skinned, oval-faced, pomegranate-lipped type. He has also a legal dispenser of his wealth and hospitality who is back-number enough to be of a suspicious, inquiring nature. The lawyer knows what a perfect defense alibi is. Hence when certain domestic signs warn him of certain possibilities, he passes the suspected lady-of-the-keys on to his friends whose wives are not so inhumane and he acquires a newer and a prettier typist. For the black hair that

was once his is now mingled with the years of his vanished-lived-full-to-the-minute youth and baldness now prefers squabs to any other game.

But said lawyer is only running true to form.

His father before him was a gay old dodger.

When horses were high-stepping and quite the proper caper, and the Old Butler Plank Road ended at Keatings—or just beyond—and when knights went a-riding to business in a "buggy" or a buckboard, *paterfamilias* knew every treacherous plank along that treacherous, toll-gated thoroughfare. No night was too dark for him to successfully navigate it and the Helens he Paris-ed to are numbered among the highest and the lowest in our bailiwick—and beyond.

Now the grandson of *paterfamilias* and the son of the stenographer-loving Don Juan has lately begun to pace so true to form that father and he now compare engagement lists so as to avoid a *contretemps*. For we're easily embarrassed, we sensitive Pittsburghers, and we avoid occasions of it as we do our wives and husbands when we're on pleasure bent.

We have a pillar of morals amongst us who is a St. Anthony—in public life. In private life he and the saint are scarcely on speaking terms. A lady of his acquaintance awoke one morning to find herself no longer basking alone in the splendor of his golden wealth. She consulted an attorney about a breach-of-promise case. The attorney sent his most trusted deputy to invite the cruel man to a private seance at his office. The cruel man requested the deputy to tell his master to go bake himself before an open-hearth steel furnace.

The legal man was furious. He concocted the necessary papers for the breach-of-promise action and the trusty served them on the cruel one. Then the cruel one sought the legal man.

"Say, old chap," says he, for, like most of our moneyed men, he has spent much time—and wealth—in dear old Lunnon town, "what the Sam Hill d'you

mean by acting like this? Didn't you get me right when I consigned you to the blast-furnace heat? Am I not permitting you to enjoy the company of the fair complainant without prattling all I know to the wife of your bosom who is no longer dangerously fair and tolerantly tolerant? Do, for heaven's sake, let there be a little honor among gentlemen!"

The next day the fair complainant was solemnly assured she hadn't a ghost of a case. Then with a *dot* furnished by the lawyer and the pillar of morals she flew to Palm Beach, where she beached so successfully that she hooked matrimonially a gold fish and she now swims in exclusive waters formerly dammed against her.

But gallantry is not limited to our men.

A crow of a man whose widely spread wings are laden with that yellow dust for which men fight and die and for which women barter that of which poets sing and preachers pulpits about was accepted in wedlock by a lady, young and beautiful and with initiative. One of our best-known lawyers acted for her in the pre-nuptial settlement. Enough said as to its size.

The Crow also had a housekeeper. When the man and wife honeymooned abroad until they were sufficiently tired of each other, they returned to Pittsburgh. Everyone sat up expecting the housekeeper to be without a home. But everybody doesn't always guess right. The charming wife retained the housekeeper at a trebled salary, and laying upon her only one restriction: to make home pleasanter than ever for the Crow. The beauty, thus freed, now spreads her wings in many flights and as flying alone has no romance in it, she is accompanied by jays of various plumage. And the Crow, who is an expert Bridge player, is content to remain at home knowing that "honors are easy" and that the game of life is still worth the playing.

But all our gambling is not done in our own little valley.

One of our men who represents the

commodity for which Pittsburgh is most noted once upon a time so embarrassed the bank at Monte Carlo that they shut up shop until he took the *rapide* for Ostende. There, in the delightful Kursaal on the *Digue* where Cleo, the earless, and Otero, the light-toed, once condescended to throw away the gold of old King Grey Beard, he repeated his gaming exploits with such success that from that time on he has been *persona grata* with two crowned heads, especially when the latter are in need of a loan to tide them over.

We have also a noted woman financier among us who is interested in interior decorations. No, she doesn't deal in fizz-water. Her decorations are of the kind which hang from wall and ceiling and look up from divans and floors. In other words, she creates the proper setting in which champagne may act most seductively. Science—and eugenics—have at last impressed upon us the truth that environment is *the* thing after all. And this environment may be "A Garden Without Walls" or a "Hell's Playground," according to the taste of him or her who cares to seek and find and enjoy.

We're not at all insular. The sky's our limit and we would Jacob-ladder it to Mars if we thought Mars held any thrill or pleasure we have not yet experienced.

We are thoroughly pagan and we

are not ashamed to acknowledge it. There is no holier-than-thou cant about us.

We live wholly in the present and we make every moment of it yield its particular joy.

What more, pray, can be expected of any nation, let alone a city not of the first class, as our government classes cities.

But what care we what stamp others put upon us? We brand ourselves and we're not ashamed of our markings. We would just as soon have a dove-cote in New York, London, Paris, Berlin or Vienna as we would on Squirrel Hill.

Our morals and our money!
To know them is to love us.

Of course, there are some snobs still amongst us who cling tenaciously to an innocuous past, but, thank Dives, they are fast being relegated to the dust-heap of dull respectability.

Those of us who are of today are not yet gorged enough with unmorality as to have a conscience. For, conscience, like gout, comes with overfeeding, with satiety. And we've just begun to live, to feed, to enjoy.

And having no ancestors to shame us and no perfectly proper family ghosts of a reputable past to cart around with us, untrammeled we cavort nimbly and joyously to the music of life and we see to it that every moment is lived to its highest and fullest intensity.



IT is not difficult to kiss a pretty girl. The difficulty lies in finding the pretty girl!



A WOMAN'S kiss is a barometer of her love.



MARRIAGE: love carried too far.



THE POINT OF VIEW

By James Nicholas Young

THE authority on genealogy and John Smith were conversing.

"Now see here, young fellow," said John Smith, "I've been a darned sight too busy to look into such matters, but I would like to know something about my family. I sort o' believe there's a lot more to this here blood and heredity than most folks are willing to admit, after all. You can't get a thoroughbred from a nag, can you? And I rather guess people are pretty much the same as horses. No doubt about it

in my mind—blood sure will tell every time!"

Two months later the authority on genealogy made a voluminous and entirely veracious report of his findings anent the family of Smith. As soon as the man had departed, Mr. Smith lighted a cigar and meditated for half an hour. Then he delivered himself of this bit of wisdom:

"Horses and people are different. A man's what he *makes* himself. To hell with heredity!"



THE THOUGHT

By John Hall Wheelock

MY heart is like a shady grove
That harbors for a June
My thoughts, like song-birds mad with love
Under the moon.

On all the windy boughs they sit
And in the blowing grass—
But one bird silently enters it,
And sings alas.

Then all the rest grow sad and still
That made a singing noise,
There is no sound on all the hill
But that one voice,

Faint with the memories in his breast—
It is the thought of you—
And when it ceases all the rest
Are silent, too.



MINIATURES OF WOMEN

By Helen Woljeska

I

La Femme à Sept Ans

THE skin of an enormous polar bear lies across the mirror-like floor.

The rooms are dazzling with light. On the bronze-colored brocade cushions and divans sit beautiful women with white arms and breasts and glowing jewels. Men, nonchalant and listless, in glittering Austrian uniforms, or solemn, decorated suits, are beside them, forming multicolored silhouettes against the old-gold hangings . . . and wishing they were in surroundings less formal, where there would be true enjoyment for their true selves.

Margit stands beside her newest cousin.

She leans against him.

She takes his hand into her two little hands, and holds it tight.

Sometimes she hugs it to her breast. She is seven years old. . . .

And he is nineteen; just lately arrived for a week's visit. Only a week! Margit feels all the tragedy of love.

She presses closer to him.

She whispers.

"I love you—you must not go again—I love you . . ." And violently her small, red mouth kisses his irreproachably laundered shirt bosom.

The young man frees himself gently.

"Darling," he is somewhat embarrassed, imagines all eyes are upon him, "you have other cousins—they will stay in Vienna all winter—Look at Alexander over there. How handsome in his blue uniform! Why don't you love him?"

"Can one choose?" Her big dark eyes

are full of reproach. "No, no. Only you! And you must not go. I will not let you. Do you hear? Never, never, never."

She throws her slender bare arms around him, trembling rapturously at his caress.

"A little bacchante!" he thinks. "If only she were ten years older. . . ."

A tall, stately man crosses over to them.

"It is high time that the little one go to bed," announces Uncle Carl's sonorous voice, "come, Manfred, come away—"

And he tries to separate the child from him.

But she is defiant, wild with love and champagne. She clings to the young man. Hard sobs shake her. And her eyes blaze hatred at the intruder.

Then the quickly summoned governess stretches forth a long, pale hand—it has a steel grasp.

Everything seems to whirl around the child. She feels herself dragged away, deeply miserable, utterly helpless. Tears flood her burning face.

"Promise—promise"—she calls back—"you will come to my room to say good night—"

Then she is gone.

* * * *

A shaded lamp burned in the little nursery bedroom. The fire crackled cheerfully in the pale porcelain stove. The pink bed was uncovered—silken quilt and plumeau, shimmering linen sheets, embroidered pillow—and the dainty nightgown lay ready. A cozy odor of clean warmth floated through the air.

"*Couchez-vous vite,*" said the governess sternly, "*vous étiez très méchante ce soir.*"

She began to undo the little dress. But the child shrank back.

"*Merci, je n'ai pas sommeil.*"

And she threw herself on the bed, and stared at the raving cupids on the ceiling.

The governess soon lost patience.

"*Eh bien, quand est-ce-que vous aurez la bonté de vous déshabiller?*"

The child did not answer.

"*On sait bien que vous attendez monsieur,*" sneered the governess. "*Quelle idée! Il aura bien autre chose à faire! . . . Amoureuse à sept ans!*
Mais, c'est une honte. . . ."

The child turned her face to the wall.

Silence.

By and by there was a brisk, quick, elastic step in the corridor. A short knock. And He stood in the room—young, bright, smiling.

Margit flew up.

"Manfred!" she cried.

And passionately she threw herself into his arms.

He was at the foot of the bed, she knelt on the rose-colored plumeau. The dress had slipped from her frail shoulders. Their arms were around each other's necks. And wildly she kissed him again and again.

"*C'est une honte . . .*" thought the governess.

II

The Model

THE heat in the men's life-class was stifling.

The model's body glistened and her cheeks seemed on fire. She held her small head daintily erect, its heavy hair coiled into a deep Psyche knot. She looked like a slender Greek statue, fashioned of ivory and bronze. The men about her, in their loose, smock-like painting aprons, were working away, some in intense absorption, others chatting and joking.

The model's thoughts busily computed: "After I shall have paid my board on Saturday, and my laundry

bill, I'll have four dollars left. Shall I buy a silk petticoat—or that crêpe de chine blouse I saw at Wanamaker's? I need both. . . . But never mind. Next week I'll pose for Mr. Gardner. He pays more than the school. Then I might— Still, I prefer posing here. It's much more interesting and jolly. That Harold (I don't know his other name) is so amusing. Cute-looking, too. But I like the tall, dark young man best—Krebiehl. He is a real gentleman. Whenever the others start telling ugly stories he makes them stop—for my sake. A gentleman! I wonder . . . That Frenchman over there is loathesome. The way he looks at me. I could murder him! . . ."

Harold thought: "Pretty girl, that model. Wonder what she does with her evenings?"

The Frenchman, wrapt in adoration, drank in the beauty of her body, from the coppery wave of her hair to the rosily tipped heels and toes. "The line of her hips—*cela me fait tressaillir. . . .*"

But Krebiehl only thought of his work.

III

The Widow

People say: "She is fortunate—she has her little income, her child, her friends—she is fortunate—"

And how is her life? The life of Madge, who has eyes like a Madonna?"

It is morning.

She lies in the wide double bed, her small child beside her.

She awakens; shakes back her yellow mane, stretches slender white arms. Carefully, not to awaken the child, she glides out of the sheets. She slips on a loose pale blue kimono, pale blue mules. The small, white bathroom smells like French soap—*le trèfle incarnat*—and perfumed cremes. She dips her pale face into the lukewarm water, splashes about, then dries it. And so on. . . .

Then into her dainty kitchen to prepare the porridge.

Now to dress the child.

Breakfast.

She sits there, a bit listless. Always the same cup, the same embroidered doilies, the same wall-paper opposite her. . . .

The little girl eats with abandon.

Scarcely the last mouthful swallowed, and off she hurries to school.

The widow goes to and fro, takes a fresh handkerchief out of her drawer, looks if there are any little holes, pulls out the bedclothes, washes the breakfast dishes, opens doors and windows, busies herself with the vacuum cleaner, and the whole apartment looks as though it could never more be straightened out.

But suddenly, like magic, everything is in order again; neat and clean, polished and in its place. Her flowers once more stand before the crystal-clear windows, and look as though a warm summer-rain had washed them. Everything breathes order and peace. . . .

For a thousand days it has been so. Order and peace.

What time is it?

How does the time pass until noon? It passes.

They sit down in their accustomed places, unfold cool napkins. Lovingly the mother eyes her child. It has much to tell.

Then it is gone again. Back to school.

For a thousand days it has been so.

Order and peace, and the child. If it were not for the child . . . ?!

* * * *

Afternoon.

She goes out, or some friend calls. In turn, one speaks and listens. Any news? Anything to free, to awaken? Nothing.

She reads a book, poetry. In it she seeks the answer to her inarticulate questionings. But the poet soars far up to the stars. . . .

The child comes home, storming into the room, asking for an apple, a cookie, and out she rushes again, to play.

It is time to prepare dinner. Oh, the redeeming drudgery of housekeeping! "Have I enough butter, eggs, farina, for to-morrow's breakfast? I must put

cocoa on my list—I am almost out of it. How expensive foodstuffs are! Everything growing dearer. . . ."

Evening. The lamp is burning.

"What lessons for to-morrow, darling?"

"Oh, my geography lesson is so hard! Eight states with their capitals and principal manufacturing towns!"

* * * *

"Good night, sweetheart."

"Good night, muzzie."

* * * *

Finally she stands once more in the tiny bathroom that smells like *tréfle incarnat*. She pats her pale face with perfumed creams. "What for, anyway—who for—?" But all the same, she does not give it up.

It has been so for a thousand days.

Careful not to awaken the child, she glides into bed. But the little girl's eyes are wide open.

"How pretty you look, muzzie," she whispers.

"Sweetheart—"

The widow switches off the light, and passes her arm under the blond curly head.

She closes her lids.

She sighs—

IV

Vieille Fille

It is her day at home.

She is chatting with a friend, who is a "happy" wife. . . .

There are quite a good many callers, including some men. . . . The young girl on the tabouret wonders what they come for?

The elderly man beside her thinks: "Really, the rooms are furnished with good taste. They don't at all look like the 'model house' in our great store. . . . There is a certain personality—very much like Miss P. herself. . . . A subtle, congenial charm—" He tries to find the right word, fails, gives up, and devotes himself to the refreshments.

She is not young. She never was beautiful. She knew not the depths of sorrow, nor the heights of human bliss,

and love has ever remained a mystery to her. How does it happen that she understands everything human? In her dark eyes lies a treasure of compassion, and about her lips plays the smile of good humour, while the wide brow betrays a mind that was allowed to develop as it wished—no matter how its terrestrial abode happened to look.

"She has accepted the worst, evidently, squarely looked it in the face, and made the best of it—" the elderly gentleman formulates his chaotic opinions. "This shrimp salad is delicious. Ah! she has plenty to do—plenty of chances to use her warm heart, agile mind, and cheerful handshake—she is a splendid cook, too. This shrimp salad—"

The "happy" wife is voluble.

She speaks of her husband with patronizing superiority.

"Ah!" thinks the old maid, "prosaic disillusionment! Better forever to dream of an unknown Paradise—than to know that no Paradise exists—"

V

The Old Baroness

THE sun shines into her room on the top floor of the large, suburban boarding house. It shines upon the starched "Nottingham" curtains, the glistening green leaves of her rubber tree, the gilded cage of her wise gray parrot, upon her own finely wrinkled ivory face. And as she stands there by the light-flooded, wide-open window, shading her lavender-lidded eyes with a delicate and faded hand, she can look out over the budding treetops, 'way across the Hudson, and to the blue Palisades.

"It is a beautiful view," she thinks. "I am to be envied. So many women must look into eternally gray apartment-house courts. . . ."

"*Pauvre Irène*—" says the parrot, "*pauvre-pauvre Irène*—"

He is a highly educated parrot, and speaks three languages.

But this is his favorite saying: "*Pauvre Irène*."

"Remarkably warm for the beginning of April—" she thinks. "Beginning of April—" She toys with her wedding ring.

Opposite her bed, on the wall, hangs the large, handsome photograph of an old gentleman, a military-looking old gentleman, who smiles at her out of his heavy, green-gold frame. "*Der schoene Baron*" he had once been nicknamed.

Her eyes light up, and she sinks into memories.

Then she remembers: "There are some violets in the garden near the grape-arbour. I must ask Miss Lane if I may pick some. Yes, dear—" she addresses the picture, "you shall have your violets—in sweet memory—of—"

Outside on the piazza, in the sunlight, a few old lady-boarders, in sweaters and coats, are rocking, and enjoying the spring air.

"Coming to join us?" asks little Mrs. Doty. She is all crippled up with rheumatism, but ever cheerful and smilingly agreeable, with a young girl's complexion, and the confiding, clear eyes of a child.

Miss Irwin invites her to a chair next to her own. And Mrs. Baxter, round and wrinkled like a small, white apple, stops in the middle of the description of her latest attack of indigestion to say a word of greeting. . . .

But the old baroness thanks them all.

"I'm going to pick a few violets—" she explains, almost bashfully.

And down she goes the wide piazza steps.

"Careful, not to get wet feet!" cautions Miss Irwin.

Oh, what wonderful violets! Deep, deep, purple. And pale ones, almost white. Pale—pale—. If only they had the fragrance of their sisters in the Prater—

She picks them, carefully, tenderly.

"*Pauvre, pauvre Irène*—" screeches the parrot through the open window.



THE FALL OF A GENTLEMAN

By L. M. Hussey

WHEN I met him first at the Travellers' Club, of which neither he nor I were members, I conceived him to be a man in middle life, with an extremely energetic disposition. And then, with opportunity to give him more intimate observation, it came gradually to me that he was well past middle age—that he was, in truth, a really old man, but miraculously preserved and no less miraculously alive.

Perhaps because of our similar status at that place, being, as I have said, both strangers, we felt a certain attraction to each other.

I talked with him a little and discovered a peculiar piquancy associated with his vocal delivery—a roll of the eye displaying the whites, and an occasional protuberance, briefly, of the tongue, as if to taste the savour of the words.

I liked him.

But I was somewhat surprised when he invited me to his lodgings.

"I have some curious stuff you'd find an interest in, no doubt," he said.

And after a pause:

"You'll drop around some evening this week?"

I hesitated.

But he seemed particularly to desire my company.

"In the light that we're both strangers in the city . . ." he insinuated.

So I consented and went around to see him.

It was a cold night and the warmth of his rooms tingled my senses agreeably. His manner was an easy one, he greeted me without formality, as rather an old friend. As I removed

my overcoat and gloves I glanced about and was a little surprised at the character of his place.

I had expected, for some not particularly clear reason, a certain austerity . . . hard furniture . . . and a tendency toward the barren. Perhaps it was the old man's personal impression of vitality and hardness which had given me this notion.

But there was nothing of the kind. The room into which he led me was crowded to an almost uncomfortable fulness—and from a glance in passing I saw that his other rooms were no less occupied.

A dark servant appeared, rather more noiselessly than is conventional, and served us with cigars and liqueurs.

The old man extended his strong hands in a gesture of inclusion and spoke to me.

"Look about the walls," he said. "I wanted particularly to give you a glance at this room, in consideration of some of the things we were discussing the other evening. I call this my 'knife chamber'—a rather loose terminology, since you'll observe some antique pistols and a crusader's mace. Also a few bludgeons from the Islands. Crude stuff . . ."

My initial glance at the apartment had not failed to note its singularity. But now I was afforded an opportunity for a detailed scrutiny. The walls, if I may so put it, were tapestried with weapons, that is, weapons of a curious and exotic character. There was scarcely a square centimeter of wall-space uncovered. The general effect was grotesque and a little startling.

At the moment I was attracted by a

Chinese set, grouped. A suit of armour, fashioned out of some reedy material, a bowl-shaped helmet, and a large variety of knives.

The old man, observing the direction of my eye, arose and gestured me to follow him.

"These are very remarkable stickers," he said, smiling genially.

He removed one of the weapons from the wall and handed it to me. It was sheathed in a hard wood, or possibly a bamboo, with a handle of the same material, so that the covered weapon gave the impression of an ornamental club. The blade tapered to a point and was very bright and sharp.

Returning it to my host, he performed the somewhat startling feat of running the edge over his tongue.

"Very good stickers," he repeated, and his eyes rolled and his tongue thrust itself betwixt his lips and tasted his words.

The mannerism was extraordinarily agreeable.

"I've been wanting to fix all this stuff on a geographical basis—of course I've done what grouping I could in the short time that I've been a resident here. But eventually I intend to get a larger room and have a map of the world done in pleasing colours on the wall—something like a modern railroad station, you know. Then I'll distribute all this business according to the map—you get the idea?"

He moved a little to his right, and I followed him.

From the wall he removed a short, broad-bladed knife, curved somewhat into the suggestion of a crescent.

"What do you suppose that is?" he asked me.

I handled the thing—and of course I had never seen anything like it before.

"What?" I asked.

"It came from the Tongans of the Fijis. I got it about fifty years ago.

. . . It was used then. . . ."

He paused, but not before I had detected a reminiscent sadness in his vocal colour.

But he brightened and continued:

"It's a little hard to give the instrument a name. Briefly, I might call it a Priest's Carver or a Sympathy Knife. When a death occurred in the family, a priest was called in and he brought one of these with him. He was the official carver—and he distributed the edible remains of the deceased relative with this knife. It was a religious rite—a feast of sympathy. Quaintly touching custom, eh?

He exhibited the whites of his eyes and tongued his words with his peculiar protuberance of the articulating muscle. His amiable face was lighted with a charming vivacity. I found him a tremendously agreeable old gentleman.

Still retaining the curved knife in his hands, a shade of melancholy darkened his features and as he raised his eyes to me I observed they were more lustrous than usual.

"Suma-Suba gave it to me," he said. "I guess it's been *more* than fifty years ago."

He hung the instrument again upon the wall.

"His was a melancholy case," he added.

"Suppose you tell me," I suggested.

"I didn't bring you here to stuff you with old anecdotes."

"But at my request?"

A second of hesitation and his face expressed a warm geniality and he indicated a chair.

"By all means then," he said.

We reseated ourselves and he put a match to a fresh cigar.

II

"I WASN'T a particularly old chap—as you may guess—and I'd just come over from the Samoans, a plain wanderer, you know, and simply after new impressions. I thought I'd take in the Fijis and look over the anthropophagi. Always an interesting thing to me."

"But I found more interest in the country. It's not as charming now as it was then, but it's charming enough

even in these days. I was on the Great Viti first and the Great Land last—they call it the Vanua Levu there. I was doing the mountains—they're extraordinarily rugged and unexpected—and making pretty leisurely for the inland. I guess I was up about three thousand feet when I met Suma-Suba. Poor chap!

He stopped and relighted his cigar, which had gone out in the course of his explanation.

The name, this Suma-Suba, seemed inevitably to throw him into profound (for the moment) hypochondry, and I was anxious to hear more.

And he noticed my attention and continued:

"I was resting, you understand, in a most romantic situation. I could look down over the edge of a precipice which I knew to be sheer, but rather than something barbaric gave the impression of an old ivy wall. You see, the sides were positively cloaked in vines. And they extended down to a dark pool of green water at the bottom. Suma-Suba came upon me leaning over and staring down. He coughed several times before I was aware of his proximity—and then he startled me a little.

"'You must be careful how you lean over there,' he said.

"Now, this speech was a surprise to me. Because it was delivered in English . . . and a cultivated and somewhat precious English. You must remember these were the days before many Englishmen, or even Americans, in the Viti group. The missionaries were just beginning to come. It's a mistake, too, to suppose they were eaten. This is a foolish jest of the uninformed. Unluckily they were all too lean for the Fiji taste.

"So it was somewhat astonishing to hear English from a casual native. Of course there was nothing surprising in his politeness nor his gentlemanly demeanour, for all the Islanders had this characteristic in the early days. Until they were corrupted they were born gentlemen.

"He seated himself beside me and we

fell into conversation. He rather liked to practise his English.

"'I learned it,' he said, 'from one of your priests. I lived with him nearly a year.'

"From the first I liked Suma-Suba. His manner was nothing less than distinguished, his face cultured and the habit of his person graceful. Not European or American, you know, but delightful. I liked him tremendously. And he liked me, I could see that in his demeanour.

"We continued our talk and I sensed that in Suma-Suba's mind there was a subtle expectancy. Presently he put to me a man-to-man request.

"'Have you' (his delicacy occasioned him hesitation) . . . 'a little . . . whiskey?'

"Fortunately I had . . . a pocket flask. I placed it in his hands and he drank with a charming relish. Returning the flask, he looked up at me and smiled.

"'I'm interested in civilisation,' he said.

"That, mind you, was an historic utterance. It started the whole affair—and the disastrous end. For we went at once into conversation upon civilisation and I saw immediately that Suma-Suba was obsessed and fascinated. He would, he said, give the little fingers of ten ancestors to go with me to Europe. . . . or America.

"You must understand, all our talk and final arrangements were not put through in a day and an hour. The affair was stretched over several weeks, for Suma-Suba became my companion and we did the island tour together. But eventually his requests took on a plainness—he desired me to take him back with me.

"It was a delicate situation. This Suma-Suba was a gentleman to the bone. I never knew a more honest nor a more genial man. He was a genuine nobleman. To talk with him was a delight and the truth and charm of his personality would have got under the skin of an Akka nigger. He was the sort of man you would instinctively—it

wouldn't matter what outlandish place you came from—hesitate to offend. And so, there were delicacies.

"Because, as you will perceive, the amiable Suma-Suba had his peculiarities—from a European and American standpoint. Particularly dietary. He had a fondness, idiosyncratic of the inhabitants of the islands, for human flesh. Not that this wasn't a beneficent thing—I don't share the ordinary prejudice. Travel broadens a man. As Suma-Suba explained it to me:

"'You hesitate to eat man-flesh,' he said. 'I think your people will eventually come to it. To begin with, it's so wholly sanitary (cremation was not in vogue; sanitation was yet to be invented; Suma's mind demonstrated a singular precocity of outlook). 'Moreover, it has an economic advantage. To do otherwise is to commit a great waste—a rather barbaric waste, so far as I can see it. There is no reason why superior flesh should be sacrificed to satisfy a prejudice. If nothing else, it's robbing the poor. Perhaps this explains the occasion of your slum problem and the starvations I have heard about. Then, from a sentimental standpoint, one desires to consume personally one's deceased relatives and friends. It's least one can sympathetically do. Of course, you Europeans and Americans may lack that much sentimentality. You are perhaps a more stolid people. . . .'

"Now, under these circumstances, you will get an inkling of my difficulty."

He stopped, relighted his cigar for the second time, and smiled at me his charming and cultivated smile.

"You wanted to bring him with you?" I asked.

"Exactly. I had conceived a great fondness for Suma-Suba. No man could fail getting the warmth of his superior personality. But to take him home with me was more than a slight problem. You see, I hesitated to suggest the dietary question to him—that is, the necessity for his abstemiousness—for the most part, you know—for of

course there were circumstances . . ."

"Of course," I assured him. "I'm liberal enough to understand that."

"But when he frankly discussed the question with me, as you already know he did, I was able to put the thing before him without circumlocution.

"Suma-Suba was a gentleman. He merely smiled.

"'Naturally,' he remarked. 'I have thought of that. I shall be able to use your diet, the diet of your country . . . for the most part. . . . You need have no fear for me. . . .'

"So when I left Vanua Levu Suma-Suba came with me, and ultimately I brought him to New York.

"He had a little difficulty during the sea voyages. Particularly, when we crossed the Atlantic. Once I discovered him observing with great intensity a pair of obese infants rolling on the deck.

"'Large children, eh?' I said.

"'Too fat,' said Suma-Suba, ruminating.

"'Oh . . .'

"'It is unfortunate they should be so fat.'

"'They can't be blamed.'

"'No, naturally—but—they shouldn't have to suffer a lifetime of that inconvenience. The altruistic thing . . .'

"I placed my hand paternally—although he was very little younger than myself—on his shoulder.

"'Suma,' I said, 'you must remember!'

"He sighed. He was a gentleman, however, and not lacking in subtlety. There was no trouble on the Atlantic voyage. Although—you really couldn't have blamed the poor fellow. . . .

"New York enchanted him. And that wasn't by any means the New York of today—keep in mind the years that have gone over. He had a thirst for investigation that would have been creditable in a scientific man. I went with him everywhere. It is true, he had his moments of homesick abstraction—the sight of a hearse would set him to sighing, for example—he could never get over the economic waste of it.

"But on the whole he was supremely

happy. And so delightful a companion, such a straightforward gentleman.

"Until I noted a change . . .

"In the beginning it was less a thing of actions than an aura about him, an atmosphere of repulsion. Very faint, you understand. I wondered—but there was nothing definite. I couldn't lay my hands on anything.

"Then action and definiteness obtruded themselves.

"First, Suma stopped drinking whiskey. I was at once alarmed. This is not a good sign in any man, for when a man who has a love for whiskey suddenly abandons it you may know that no good is boded. And particularly in the case of Suma-Suba.

"Then I discovered that Suma-Suba did not prefer my company in the evenings, but would steal out and come home late—and sober. Moreover, he acquired more and more solemnity of demeanour and there proportionately vanished the geniality which had previously marked his deportment.

"I could not imagine to where the nocturnal journeys were directed. Suma-Suba offered no explanation. And one gentleman does not put an inquiry of this kind to another. But I began to have my fears. Still, I thought then, in my infantile optimism and unsophistication, Suma-Suba has too much intellect, too much *savoir faire*, for that.

"But I was wrong.

"It might not have been a gentlemanly, nor an honorable thing to do, but I suppose under the circumstances there is a certain excuse for me. Anyway, I followed Suma-Suba one evening.

"He traversed the streets with his head down, looking at none of the phenomena which had a short space past absorbed his attention. And he did not walk far. He stopped presently be-

fore an ungracious house of red brick and climbed the steps and went in the door like an intimate. I knew then this was the place to which he had been coming. And I recognized the house, and its occupant. My fears were, with no little shock, realized.

"I blame myself, of course. I should have had greater discretion and never brought Suma back with me. He was caught unaware—it takes a strong man and one well on his guard not to be debauched by civilization.

"Suma-Suba had fallen into insidious company. The place he visited nightly was the home of—a clergyman!

"Need I tell you that his old charm was presently as vanished as the ray of sun that perishes before a rainy day? His face elongated, frequently he wept, he acquired the habit of admonitions, he took to perspiring over his sins—civilization, in short, got hold of him and ruined him. It wasn't a month before he left my house.

"On parting he admonished me with an uplifted forefinger.

"'I am a Christian,' he said. 'You're a man of sin. I must not live with you. I'm going out into the world to do good and earn a living by honest toil.'

"I never saw him afterward. But I heard of him—through acquaintances. It's not often I'm moved to tears—I really wept over his case. He was—well, haven't I tried to give you a notion of his gentlemanliness, his positive nobility of manner when I met him initially? . . . before he was civilized? . . ."

The old gentleman, melancholy-eyed, looked at me.

"And what finally became of him?" I asked.

"He became a Pullman porter," said the old man, sadly.



IRISH KISSES

By Morris Gilbert

WHAT are they like? asked Phelim Ogh....

Like wild-rose petals floatin' on dew,
Like spring rain fallin'
An' dissolvin' away on Lough Ree—
As fey as the Costa Bower, as heady as poteen,
Swifter than brickbats at Donnybrook,
An' as tantalizin' as the whir-r of a blackthorn.

The Good People made them
Out o' wisps of laughin'
An' straws of mortal delight—
Goold can't put them on any man's mouth
But they're cheaper than porridge
For the gossoon wit' a laugh in his teeth
An' a way wit' him. . . .
'Twas for lack av thim
Aristotle invented philosophy.

Sweeter than blarney they are, an' daintier than silk,
Softer than prayers goin' up to St. Brigid,
An' lighter than childer's hands
On a mother's breast.

They're as true as him that gets them,
An' sure they don't spoil for savin' or spendin'
For there's more to be had av thim
Than shamrock on Barrow Banks. . . .

Ask Tom Moore, said Phelim Ogh.



WOMAN is naturally truthful. Nature, however, has little to do with women nowadays.



THE JACKAL

By Paul Hervey Fox

I

IT was on a hot and muggy day in July that Milly first saw him.

Commanding the centre of a glittering counter in Harneyer's spacious department-store, she showed to advantage between the two sallow blondes who were her aides. Flanked by them, Milly's vivid, brunette beauty was like a ruby set between faded pearls. Her hair was dark and held the shimmer of clean silk; her eyes, cut like almonds, were of a rich, liquid brown; but the face, for all its loveliness, was weak and shy.

She was staring across the array of quaintly-shaped perfume-bottles that warm afternoon when she saw him coming. She was tired and uncomfortable, and she loathed the great store and the aimless toil it so monotonously exacted. Romance, even tragic romance, lurked nowhere in its brutal, efficient heart. She had a dry smile for the popular fictions concerning department-store heroines. How this one was robbed, that one ruined, this other enriched, sprang solely, she felt, from the imaginations of the cynical folk who write sentimental stories. The only truth they enlisted in their narratives was the account of the fatigue, the dreary tale of days, the hatred of the employees for their prison.

But, even as she saw this man, she wondered whether, after all, there mightn't be some veracity in the stories of the jackals that prey upon underpaid prettiness.

He swayed down the aisle, a bulk of man, a huge thing with a Panama tilted on his head, a thin, flashing stick in his

hand, and round, oily eyes glancing out of an over-pink face.

He looked as if he lived too well: the thickened neck, the sensuous flush spoke of a candid carnality.

His eyes, moving easily over the concourse of passing faces, struck Milly's. A look of alert interest stirred his heavy features; he came forward.

"I want to buy a leather-bag for a relative," he began.

Milly noted how hoarse his voice was, and under his relentless, smirking scrutiny she flushed.

"This is the perfumery department," she said faintly.

The man laughed.

"I mean I want to buy a bottle of perfume for a relative," he corrected himself.

Milly set out sample after sample, but it seemed difficult to please him. His gaze never left her face, and once as she submitted a brightly-hued bottle he took it from her in such a way that his hand might touch hers. He made his purchase at last, and as he waited for his change he mopped his forehead with a vast handkerchief.

"Pretty warm," he volunteered, and followed the remark with his odious smile.

Milly nodded with pursed lips, and looked away. As the carrier sang metallically over the wires on its return trip the man leaned forward with an abrupt vehemence.

"Say—say, you wouldn't care to take dinner with me to-night, or see a show, or—or anything?"

Milly shrank back, staring hard at his diamond stick-pin. She wanted to say something sharp and crushing, something that would put this brute in

his place, but her weakness of nature did not permit her.

"But I—I don't know you even," she stammered like any coquette.

The man dropped a card on the counter.

"Well, I'll ask you next time," he said in his quiet, hoarse voice. "Perhaps it is a little sudden."

He plodded patiently away, and Milly's terrified eyes followed the fat, retreating back. She picked up the card.

"Mr. Augustus Renworthy," was engraved upon it with Germanic flourishes.

II

CASUAL as the experience was, it was new to Milly. Sharp conflicts with shoppers who seemed to find the blame for high prices in her, had hitherto been her only encounters of an exciting nature.

She told young Tom Sloane the story when, three or four days later, he called to take her to the movies. Sometimes she thought she was in love with Tom. But she wasn't ever sure. He was so—so ordinary. He was a clerk in a trust company, and at thirty-five he would still be a clerk. Poor Tom! Life wasn't fair.

Milly knew just what marriage with him would be like: a skimpy flat, and cheap clothes, a litter of babies to worry her, and no earthly amusement. Not that he had asked her to marry him so far, but then, Milly thought in her pretty little head that she could manage that.

But she didn't want to marry Tom—not yet; he'd done nothing brave or chivalrous or fine for her to idealize romantically; and the grey thought of shabbiness, of a life pinched by the fingers of poverty, destroyed Milly's dreams in their infancy. Milly loved money.

After the last film had flickered and they were walking home, Milly blurted out her pathetic little story of fear and embarrassment. The way in which

Tom accepted her confidences angered her more than she cared to confess.

"Don't you go fooling around with one of those rich guys!" he warned her loftily.

When she reiterated the fact that she had repulsed Renworthy, Tom seemed to think it was purely out of compliment to himself. A patronizing smile stepped upon his guileless, blond face.

She was vexed; she regretted that she had told him; and when, at her doorstep in Brooklyn, he asked jauntily, "And now when'll I see you again, Milly?" she retorted in a sudden little spurt of irritation:

"I don't know, and I don't care."

Through a slit in the window curtains she saw the tall, slim, boyish figure vanish down the street.

"It serves him right," said Milly.

But her mouth was twitching and there was a rueful look about her eyes.

"Oh, I'm tired of being honest and dull and good!" she added; "it doesn't seem to get you anything!"

With that significant remark she went to bed.

III

PERHAPS Milly's virtue was largely a matter of timidity. Good people form two classes: those who are too brave to be bad, and those who are too cowardly. It may be that Milly at the bottom of her nature was an immoralist. Or, which is most likely of all, her vivid resentment of Tom Sloane's attitude made her the victim of a hazardous impulse.

It happened that on the morrow and toward closing time she saw a familiar bulk threading the aisles in her direction. Her heart began to thump in an almost audible manner. She looked down and did not lift her eyes until a hoarse voice said in her ear:

"Well, little girl, how are you?"

Her eyes travelled like a scared dove up that impressively garmented bulk, up that lurid scarf and diamond stickpin, to the pink, round face and its smirking eyes.

"I mustn't, oh, I mustn't!" said Milly to her pounding heart, and then—she smiled.

"What do you say to dinner with me this evening?" asked Renworthy at that encouragement.

For an instant she hesitated. Before her stood Mammon with all of Mammon's power and all that Mammon could give; the reverse of the picture held only poor Tom, a slight, boyish figure handicapped in life before the report of the pistol. Milly had the delicious glow that comes from succumbing to temptation, and which is, no doubt, one of the compensations of sin.

Her heart repeated the devil's pet phrase: "I will only go so far."

Aloud she murmured with scarlet cheeks:

"Perhaps—perhaps I might."

That evening was intoxication to Milly. She was playing with fire, she knew, as she sat across the table from Renworthy, but if she were able to keep a cool head, she knew she could fore-stall burnt fingers.

Renworthy was a silent man; he encouraged her to talk, and she prattled of her existence and its petty demands with the realization that she had an interested audience. Really, he was not as awful as she'd thought. At the realization that she was beginning to think him just a little bit nice, she renewed her vigilance and sought for something about him to hate. It was not hard to find. With a thick cigar poking out of his chubby jowl, his round, glistening eyes travelling appreciatively over her face, she felt, after all, that he *was* a beast.

But he was so rich, so magnificent! The way the waiters scampered at a flick of his finger, the way the whole clashing cabaret seemed to play for him alone, gave Milly a sense of pride in having him as escort. And afterward, at the playhouse in good orchestra seats, where the light did not search out costumes too cruelly, she felt soothed and happy.

They walked down Broadway after

the performance, a Broadway devoted in this season to the out-of-towners. There were throngs of strangely clad folk from places like Nebraska and Maine who stared at each other with the consciousness that they were looking at the wickedest of all God's creatures—genuine New Yorkers.

"Funny, how nice it is to be with you," said Renworthy heavily. "Don't know as I ever felt so good."

Milly said nothing, but she shut her eyes tight and thought: "Look out now, he's going to do something! Don't forget!"

"I've got to go to my home-town tomorrow," he went on, "but I'll be back early next week. And I'm going to see a lot of you, little girl, ain't I? What a sweet name Milly is!"

"Don't you live in the city?" she asked wonderingly.

"I've got an apartment here," he answered her in a slow voice that seemed to carry a sub-tone of significance. "It's a kind of studio. I collect jewels and keep 'em there. If it wasn't so late I'd like you to see the place . . . You're a jewel, little girl . . . I'd like to collect you."

He chuckled in a soft, smooth way, and Milly shivered.

Jewels!

She hadn't seen his eyes, but she knew what he meant. There was no mistaking that tone.

He collected jewels! And he wanted to add her to his collection. . . . How coolly he went about things! He had clung to her hand once or twice with hot, moist fingers, but he hadn't tried to take any liberties. There was experience backing his method. If he'd only done something physical or definite, something that she could have resented, Milly might have successfully fought herself and him, too. But somehow she couldn't find the strength to break away when he was polite and kept his distance.

He suggested an after-theater supper, but she refused.

"I think I'd better go home," she said

coldly, "and I'd rather go alone, if you don't mind."

She saw that huge, round face looking down at her for a slow minute of analysis.

"All right," he murmured, and he waved to a taxi.

Elated as she was by her escape, she was curiously irritated by the fact that as he said "Good night" he did not even call her "dear."

And there was a hint of determination in the stodgy neck that made her undervalue her successful maneuvering of the night's episode.

This man was as persistent as he was shrewd.

IV

SHE was tired the next day, but it was raining, and a lax one at the store. Under the counter she had secreted a copy of an historical-romantic novel, and during lunch-hour, and whenever she could steal the opportunity, she read it feverishly. She wanted to escape from the world of actuality. Realistic stories, stories of fat, carnal men, or of struggling clerks, held no appeal for Milly.

But in the rich past she could lose herself. The gay trappings of sword and cloak villainy, the thunderous threats, the urbane challenges, the grace and hauteur and archaic speech fascinated and thrilled her. A snatched half hour of perusal, and her vision was dominated for the rest of the afternoon. When, in the neighborhood of five o'clock, Tom Sloane stepped into the store it was almost like an awakening.

As she stood there, however, ready to smile a greeting, ready to admit that she was a shade sorry for her sharp speech on the previous occasion of their meeting, a blue-coated messenger, guided by a floorwalker, approached her counter. The floorwalker was correctly majestic.

"This is not permitted," he said, "but I am overlooking the matter this time. In future you must see to it that noth-

ing of the sort occurs." He stalked away, tall, frowning, and beautiful.

Milly, with Tom watching her out of the corner of his eye as he picked up the same bottle three times under a pretense of examining it, felt herself in a whirl of perplexity. She signed the book the messenger-boy opened for her, and he put down a small packet addressed to her. On the corner was scrawled the name of the sender. Milly's breath came quickly as her glance deciphered the latter. Furtively, she slipped the packet under the counter.

"What's that?" said Tom with lowered brows.

"Oh—nothing."

"Yes, it is; is anyone sending you anything?"

"How should I know?" she retorted with her chin held high, forgetting her desire to make amends for her former unkindness.

Then in sudden repentance, she added:

"It's—it's from a man I only met once. I don't even know what it is."

Tom, the unsubtle, bent threateningly over the counter.

"See here," he began sternly.

"The floorwalker's watching you!" lied Milly in a harsh whisper. "Do you want me to lose my job? You'd better go, if you're goin' to act like that."

Straight and swift and angry, Tom Sloane strode down the aisle. Milly wanted to cry as she saw what she had done. She had bungled everything. She deserved to fall a prey to such men as Renworthy. Poor Tom! How ill she had used him! She caught up the little packet, and in the confusion of her thoughts, flung it viciously into her vanity-bag without glancing further at it.

She went on drearily till closing-time, and then as she stepped out through the gloom of the corridor toward the employees' door she found herself caught and held by strong, young arms, and felt a man's warm kisses upon her lips.

Her heart sang, and she made no resistance.

"Oh, Tom," she sobbed, "forgive me! I didn't know what I was doing. Honest, kid! I—I'm tired, Tom."

"Dearie," he said, "I came into the store to-day to ask you something. My vacation begins to-morrow. I want you to marry me, Milly, dear. I called up a minister I know in a New Jersey suburb, and he said he would expect me. And then you nearly spoiled it all. Do you love me, Milly?"

"I've loved you ever since I first saw you," Milly whimpered rapturously.

V

THE little town in which Milly was married was dark and rain-swept. Tom had taken her to a silent, old house on its outskirts. The minister, a man of forty with a gaunt, red face, had welcomed them with quiet geniality. A servant and a stranger had acted as witnesses, and Milly felt that it was odd that so simple a thing as the answer to a question and the scratch of a pen should make her feel so different a person.

They were to spend the night in the suburb, and pass the following week at the shore.

Already Milly was planning the future with intricate detail. How nice and fresh and clean Tom looked! If only he were heroic, too! Then the thought came to her that she was through with Augustus Renworthy and his persecutions forever. At that thought she felt, strangely enough, a faint tinge of regret. She loved money, but she knew it was sinful even to think of money earned at the price of the soul! In exchange for luxury she would have had to pay too cruelly. Before her stretched years of penury and commonplace days, but they were to be years of honesty and days undefiled.

Then, as she stepped down to the street with Tom by her side, the unexpected, the dramatic, the coincidental, happened. The familiar bulk of Ren-

worthy came slowly up the street in their direction!

Milly trembled, and at that instant he saw her. For a moment he could only stare, and then with an exclamation of surprise he halted abruptly.

"Why, Milly," he said, "what does this mean? How do you happen to be down here in my home-town, little girl? And who's your friend?" he added with his invariable smirk.

Milly's lips were pale, and she said nothing. But Tom, as if he fathomed by instinct the presence of an enemy, nervously stepped forward.

"See here, you!" he said, shaking a slim young fist under that red, oily face, "you clear out. Don't you bother Milly! She don't want to see you or anyone else."

"It's my opinion, Milly, my dear," said Mr. Renworthy in his hoarse voice while a terrible, pained smile crossed his face, "that you've—" But he was not permitted to finish.

With a roar Tom rushed for him.

Milly stepped back with her hands over her ears exactly as if preparing for some loud explosion. All around the monstrous bulk of Mr. Augustus Renworthy danced Tom Sloane, planting a blow here, a swift punch there.

Horrified as she was, Milly, down in the depths of her being, was secretly delighted. It was almost like living the fiction she had been reading only that afternoon! Tom was proving himself her hero. He was fighting for her. He was avenging her. He was—her *husband!* And the last word seemed best of all.

But the blows appeared to have small effect upon Renworthy. Guarding himself badly with his short, thick arms, he lunged forward, grappled with Tom, and brought him heavily to earth. The great bulk fell squarely and crushingly on the slim, boyish frame. . . .

At that sight, Milly lost what little self-possession there remained to her. There was no one visible on the long, damp street, but she bent down and tugged furiously at Tom's sleeve. The stilted speech of the historic novel that

she had been reading surged into her head. For the life of her, she could remember nothing else. It was in a strange blending of tragedy and burlesque that she cried in a shrill and breaking voice:

"Help! Oh—! Help!"

Renworthy arose gradually but with dignity. Tom got painfully upon his feet and glared at Milly.

"You little vamp, you!" he said. "So you knew all along, did you? And you got this guy to beat me up? You—you—"

He paused on the verge of some tremendous epithet, and then as Renworthy lumberingly approached him, he backed away and with a curse shambled down the street.

"Tom!" cried Milly. "Oh, Tom!"

But the beseeching despair in her voice was ruined by a burst of high, hysterical laughter.

"Poor little girl!" murmured Renworthy soothingly. "I'll get an automobile right away at the nearest garage and take you back to town."

VI

IT WAS a silent and dishevelled little girl that hugged the corner of the car on the long ride home. Milly's wearied brain refused to ponder the perplexing events of the evening; to attempt to reason things out would have been to invite madness. Renworthy was, perhaps, shrewdly aware that silence was desirable for his purposes: he did not seek to awaken her from her lifeless mood.

When at last the motor stopped before a handsome apartment-house in New York and Renworthy stepped out, Milly asked a little feverishly:

"Where are we?"

"At my studio, little girl," said Renworthy soothingly. "I thought maybe you'd like to come up and rest. I can give you a glass of wine."

"Oh!" ejaculated Milly in horror.

Then she sighed at the futility of further struggle.

So this—this was the miserable outcome of her romance. And she had dared to believe that nothing ever happened to girls in department-stores! Whatever was to happen to her, she had had, at least, one brief hour of delirium in her turgid existence. To be married, to have her husband desert her, and to run off with another man—all within the space of thirty minutes—was a syncopation of life so rapid as to be hardly credible. And now she was too tired, or too weak, to resist the only course left her. . . .

With a sudden stab of pain she remembered Tom. If only he had not acted in that strange way! What was the explanation? If only he had not turned on her with such hatred in his eyes! But she was too tired to try to fathom that mystery . . . too tired. And, anyway, she would have money and frocks and motors and everything she wanted for a space, and after that . . . well, what did it matter?

Renworthy fitted his key in the lock and flung open the door for her.

Milly uttered a little sound of wonder.

The rooms in which she found herself were at least as decorative as a sultan's. There was visible the queerest assortment of tapestries and coloured prints, the most jarring collection of gay rugs and amazingly shaped divans. Over the mantel hung a bright lithograph of the pickle works from which Renworthy's fortune was derived. And everywhere jewels and jewelled ornaments glittered in glass stands. It was beautiful, Milly thought, simply beautiful . . .

Renworthy rang a bell, and a servant came from the rear and received orders for their refreshment.

Milly sank down luxuriously into a chair.

Perhaps it was really going to be worth the price.

Renworthy leaned over her.

"Little girl," he whispered with a queer light in his eyes, "didn't you get the package I sent you?"

"Why, yes," she said with a sudden flash of memory, "but I—I forgot to open it."

He frowned.

"There's something in it for you," he said gravely.

Milly knew that with this sort of man she must be the slave of his meanest pleasure. With an assumption of interest she fumbled in her vanity-bag for the packet. Opening it, she saw before her a large solitaire circled with emeralds.

"Why," cried Milly delightedly, "why, it's lovely!" And then with almost a sob she added: "But it's—it's an engagement ring."

"Of course it is, little girl. And I want you to wear it for me. Oh, Milly, I want you to marry me! I do!" he cried hoarsely. "I'm a quiet man, I ain't much on going out, but can't you like me just a little?"

"I've loved you ever since I first saw you!" wailed Milly, "but how can I marry you? I'm married already. This evening . . . Tom . . . you saw me coming from the minister's."

"What!" cried Renworthy with a snort of astonishment. "What? Do you mean to say you don't know yet? Why, little girl, I thought you were wise, and so did the young feller. That wasn't any clergyman. I live in that town, so I ought to know. The man that stays in that house you were coming out of is a broken-down actor who will do anything for a price. Did you look at the certificate?"

"N-no," stammered Milly with round eyes.

She pulled out the crumpled paper and handed it to him.

"Worthless!" commented Renworthy after a second's scrutiny. "Poor little girl! So you thought you really were married to that young scoundrel. The only person you're going to marry is me!"

Milly looked at Mr. Augustus Renworthy with eyes in which respect was leaping by bounds. How nice a—plump man was! And how pleasant and affectionate that slightly husky note seemed in his voice! And how healthy his colour was! And what good taste he had! Looking about at the amazing jumble of furniture, relics and valuables, Milly knew that here was a man with a poetic soul.

"I'm only wondering now," she said after a moment in a soft voice, "just what it was that made Tom turn on me like that. Oh, that Tom! How I hate him! And how fine you were when you fought him!"

Renworthy's eyes gleamed with a touch of pride.

"Why did he turn on you like that?" he echoed. "'Cause he thought you saw through his game all along. Didn't you call him a sucker? . . . And now, little girl, it's time you were getting to sleep. It's after nine, and it ain't right for you to be in a man's apartment as late as that even if he is your fiance! Shall I take you home?"

"Ye-yes, Augustus," said Milly timidly.



TEN years after her marriage a woman can remember every detail of her wedding. The only detail the man can remember is the amount he gave the minister.



BEFORE marriage one quarrels for the pleasure of making up. After marriage one makes up for the pleasure of quarreling.

THE CONFESSIONS OF A HAMPERED MAN

By Charles Divine

I T'S time to lie awake o' nights
When the rains of Spring are on the roof
With the drip! drip! drip! of seductive song—
But all I hear are the snores of my wife!
It's time to walk in the velvet eve
When night takes a golden sprinkling pot
And spatters the skies with a million stars—
But my mother-in-law would call me a fool!
It's time to list to the pipes of Pan
On the upland hills in the dew of the day
When all the world is a garden close—
But I have a garden of my own
And all my golden days are spent
In repairing the ruin the chickens do.
And I dare not chase them away
Because they belong to my neighbor's wife,
And she, alas! has blue eyes and warm red lips
And a trick of cooing when she kisses you.



CAOINE

By Harold Crawford Stearns

SPRING again, and the green things growing
Birds in song, and the roses blown;
Spring again, but it's I am knowing
Spring is dead when a dream has flown.

Colleens laugh at the lads they're meeting,
All of the world is love in tune
Thrilling the air, and blithely greeting
Life and youth and another June.

Spring again, and the starlings flying
Over a land where the glad elves tread;
Spring again, but my heart is crying:
"Spring means nought when a dream is dead."

THE GAME AND ITS RULES

By Stanley Northwood

DIRECTLY Bradney took his seat at the restaurant, which for the season, at all events, was acknowledged to be the most interesting in London, he saw the woman with green eyes.

It was the third time he had seen her. He had first been aware of her one night when he had dropped into the Alhambra to look at the ballet. And she had passed him in the Park a day or two later. He was confident that she had not been aware of his scrutiny, for he was not yet used to the trick English women have of taking in every detail of an attractive male while they seem to be looking through him at some distant object.

In New York, Bradney would have been able to place her, to catalogue her as a specimen of such and such a class. Here, despite his uncommon sophistication for a lad of twenty-three, he was in doubt. He only knew that she set his heart beating faster and had banished tender memories of a score of other women.

He damned, in that moment of desire, the conventions which hedge men and women in Europe. It was an old ruse to pretend he had met a woman and thus ripen an acquaintance which had its beginning in myth. But here, where every woman wore low-cut gowns and every man evening dress, such manœuvres did not promise happy endings. He did not for a moment assume European women to be less ready for adventure than his own, but he did know there were certain rules to be observed, certain affectations to be borne if a man were to hope for success.

She was dressed in smoke-grey velvet, and her beautifully coiffured hair was of a red-brown tinge, and she wore a necklace of such unassuming pearls that he knew they must be genuine. And they were green eyes, he could swear, set in that white, clear skin.

Bradney was almost startled when she looked at him and actually smiled.

But that quickness of decision which had won fortune for the elder Bradney and a career of hedonism for his son did not forsake him. He moved to her side and greeted her as one might a dearly-loved friend. So, at any rate, the restaurant major domo thought, who preferred that the amenities of modern polite society be propitiated.

"So you're an American," she observed when the attendant waiter had gone. "That explains."

"What?" he demanded.

"That you stared at me so dreadfully at the Alhambra the other night."

"Don't Englishmen stare, too?" he retorted.

"Differently," she smiled. "They stare almost with the hope one will not be conscious of their rudeness. Americans stare as if they hoped one would be."

"It isn't rudeness when we stare," he corrected; "it's worship."

"Another thing," she said, "you ordered champagne without asking if I would drink it."

"It's the best drink there is," he said, rather taken aback. "Surely you don't want a soft drink?"

"I haven't a faint idea what a soft drink may be," she returned, "but I can't afford fattening champagne."

He looked at her splendid figure, her

perfect throat and shoulders with an appraising air. His father had not sent him to Yale to win merely academic distinction and he was not without experience.

"Whatever you take," he assured her admiringly, "suits you. I should like to have the formula. Don't tell me it's tea!"

"At half-past eight? I'm not as temperate as all that."

She looked at him through half-closed eyes. It was perhaps her most fascinating way.

"I have a great zeal for information," she said slowly. "I'm eaten with curiosity to know why, when I bowed to an old friend, you should have suddenly risen from your seat and grasped my hand with such *camaraderie*."

He looked so glum and cast down that she laughed.

"I don't think despondency sits well upon you. Suppose I tell you I am glad the real man at whom I smiled did not respond as quickly as you?"

"If you meant it, I'd be tickled to death," he answered quickly.

"Tell me about yourself," she commanded.

"I have lived one week," he returned. "It was a week ago tonight that I saw you at the Alhambra."

"What precocity!" she mocked. "I have noticed it before in you American boys. I think if business did not claim your men and utterly enthrall them, they would be fearfully dangerous, let me say, at thirty-five. What other adventures have you had in your little life?"

"None," he declared. "It has been devoted to thinking of you and wishing ill to the man I twice saw you with, that elderly man. By the way, I hope he isn't your father."

"He would be singularly charmed to hear that," she smiled. "No, he's not my father—or my husband. If you had been longer in London you might know him by name. He is not wholly undistinguished."

"I don't like his type, or him," Bradney cried jealously.

"You ought to be very grateful to him," she retorted.

She looked at him again through fringed lashes. "In fact, you ought thank him for being at this table."

"Why?" Bradney asked her.

"Because I was so angry at his keeping me waiting that I beckoned to the man behind you."

Bradney looked quickly around to the table at which he had been sitting. There was only a blank wall.

"So you beckoned to me," he corrected. "I'm here because he didn't show up. That's one way of putting me at my ease."

"There are plenty who would change places with you."

"They won't get the chance," he snapped.

Before the dinner was half consumed she rose.

"I'd rather go now," she explained. "I don't think I want to meet him tonight and he may be here any minute. You've been quite interesting, though."

"I shall grow more so every time you meet me," he assured her. "I'm like a thrilling serial."

"But this is a short story, already finished."

His face fell at her words and he followed her to a small town limousine waiting at the curb. He was to be dismissed when he had far passed that stage at which he could forget her without a pang. He blamed the man of military bearing with whom he had twice seen her as the cause. And, as he cursed under breath, the man stepped toward her, almost springing from a taxicab in his eagerness to speak. Bradney he brushed aside imperiously.

"Dear, I'm so sorry for being late," he began, "but there was an important conference at the last moment, and I was compelled to stay."

"It hasn't mattered in the least," she answered coldly; "the time hasn't dragged a bit, thanks to Mr. Bradney."

Bradney stood by awkwardly. He was at an age that insists on exacting all the honors of manhood and this stranger seemed hardly aware of his pres-

ence. The woman in the motor car relieved him.

"I'm going to give you a cigarette and a whiskey and soda. Get in."

Bradney grinned in the elder man's face as he was left frowning on the curb. He was filled with desire to know what this man was to her.

"Was he really detained?" he asked tactlessly.

"Of course," she said quickly. "Government business he could not in honor leave."

"Then why were you so angry?"

"I won't be kept waiting even for governments. Also," and she looked at him alluringly, "it might be that I want to find out what sort of a nice boy you are."

II

HER demure, garden-surrounded little house was on the fringe of Bayswater. Bradney knew little of furniture or paintings, or he would have seen that its fittings were superb. When there was a pretty woman in the case Bradney noticed nothing else. He had the habit of concentration.

On a grand piano was a photograph of the man with whom he had seen the woman. He was in uniform, with a cocked hat and a row of medals and orders across his breast.

Being young and jealous, Bradney asked disparagingly, "What is it, a captain or a lieutenant?"

"A general," she said softly, and looked into the pictured face.

A maid brought in whiskey and soda. When Bradney had quenched his thirst, the woman looked at him and smiled.

"It's *his* whiskey and soda you're drinking."

The American put the glass down hastily. It was distasteful to be drinking something provided by a man for whom he had conceived an instant aversion.

"But you're not his wife?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I'm the other thing."

"He's a damned cad not to marry you," he cried.

"So you believe in bigamy?" she returned.

"Would he if his wife were dead?"

"Men don't as a rule," she reminded him. "Marriage is so often love's last resort, a sacrifice not to be undertaken when the need has vanished."

He looked at her for a long time without speaking.

"Do you know," he said deliberately, "you are the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. I wish I lived in an age when I could kill someone to get you."

"Perhaps you did in other days. Perhaps you were the Paris who ran away with me when I was Helen."

"I'd like to run away with you to New York," he said steadily.

"I thrive only in luxury," she warned him.

"You should have it," he answered.

"But could you give it? Love in a second-rate hotel would be to me only a disgusting amour."

"Did you ever hear of Paul Bradney?" he asked. "They call him the 'Coal King.'"

"I've heard about him," she said, knitting her brows, "I remember I was fascinated to read that when his wild and extravagant heir needs more millions to squander, the 'Coal King' puts up the price of poor people's coal tuppence-ha'penny a ton."

"I'm the wild and extravagant heir," Bradney laughed.

III

WHEN General Sir Arthur Whitgreave found that the woman he loved was breaking all her engagements to be with a very wealthy young American, he experienced the bitterest moments of a career that had not been a very happy one.

Married to a woman of his own class who had long been incurably an invalid, he had thought only of his profession until a day when he had looked upon a girl with emerald eyes who was governess to the children of a friend.

Marriage was impossible so they had drifted into an irregular relationship

which had brought him the one happy period of his life. Then came that unfortunate night when a long-drawn-out war council, to which the chiefs of the allied staffs had come incognito, prevented him from meeting her. It was at this council that he was offered an important command on the Western front. His duties prevented him from being able to find her. She was always out with Paul Bradney's heir. The man was almost frantic as the hour drew near when he must leave England.

By good fortune he saw the American one midday when he was coming from the Horse Guards. Bradney was walking toward Trafalgar Square and did not seem pleased when he was accosted.

"No," said Bradney aggressively, "I don't see that any good purpose would be served by talking things over with you."

He was glad that the general looked old and pinched and tired. Without vanity, Bradney knew that his father's son was good to look upon and that a loose life had left no coarsening effects upon him.

What woman, he asked himself, would hesitate between sophisticated youth and gray experience? Nevertheless he allowed himself to be driven to the General's chambers in the Albany. He refused the inevitable whiskey and soda. He felt, as it was his intention to exhibit a certain degree of churlishness, that he did not care to accept even a conventional hospitality.

"I want to see her," the soldier said quietly. "She is never at home to me."

"I guess that's her privilege," Bradney retorted.

"I think perhaps if you were to tell her I am about to leave for the front she might change her mind."

"She might if I told her."

"And you won't?"

Bradney shook his head.

"You've had your chance," he told the elder man, "and if you lost out it's your own fault."

It afforded him satisfaction to be able to laugh at a man who was soon to have

a million soldiers under his command. There was a certain brutality about the Bradneys which had brought them to success. And he was not yet sure that this fascinating, alluring woman had ceased to care for Sir Arthur. She was so different from the other women he had met that he was never certain of her. It would be a foolish move to give her the opportunity to be influenced by the sentiment of an old affection.

"I wish you would tell me where she is," the soldier said, just a bit wistfully.

Looking closely at him Bradney saw there was something rather pathetic in the eagerness with which he awaited an answer. Gone was that air of authority that had antagonized the American and in its place a certain timidity that sat oddly on the firm, bronzed features.

Bradney found himself possessed of a less hearty relish for his task.

He called convention to his aid and ranged himself side by side with the proprieties.

"Considering the relationship between you," he said, "I should think you'd be glad to know one man has been decent enough to offer to marry her."

"Do you mean it?" asked the General.

"Well," Bradney equivocated, "it might lead to that."

He felt annoyed at being betrayed into making such an admission.

"Damn it," he snapped, "I'm not keeping you away from her. This is your city. Just hunt around till you find her."

The soldier made a gesture of despair.

"In such a vast city as this? And in the few hours I have left?"

"When do you go?" Bradney demanded.

"Tonight, at eight."

"You've six hours," the younger man reminded him.

"I must be back at the War Office by four."

The soldier hesitated. "Mr. Brad-

ney, it is very difficult for me to say this to you. I have never in my life before begged a favour of a man. Your life is at the beginning, mine almost at its end. I have not been a happy man. What happiness has come to me, she brought. And in a fit of pique she turns from me to you who can never love her as I do."

Bradney was annoyed to find a sense of embarrassment enwrapping him. He felt that his love affair, which would sooner or later yield place to one with another woman, was tawdry and vulgar compared with this display of genuine affection.

"You can write to her," he conceded, "if you want to. I'll see that she gets it."

"I want to marry her," the general said.

"You can't," Bradney exclaimed. "Your wife—"

"My wife is dead," said the soldier.

"But don't you understand she's been running around with me, and I've booked passages to New York? You can't turn the woman who's going with me into a baronet's lady."

"I want to," the other said simply.

"But why?" Bradney retorted frowning. "You don't *have* to."

"I want to do what you call the 'square thing.' I'm going to the front as you know. You do not know that I should not go if a medical board knew my unfitness. I want her to have what is mine. The only happy hours I have ever spent were with her. No matter what she does now, I shall never cease to be her debtor."

"You must love her!" Bradney said involuntarily.

"If I thought you loved her as well I should be happy. Youth calls to youth

and I am too old for her, I suppose, but I want her to have all I own."

Bradney paced the room impatiently. He would have welcomed any other attitude than this. He was forced to admit that this man whom he had detested was playing the game. He loved the emerald-eyed woman with a sincerity there was no room to doubt. Sympathy was a rare visitor to a Bradney heart. They were a hard family, wasting no pity on beaten men.

"Look here," he said suddenly, and produced a half crown from his pocket. "No protests, now! No more words! We'll spin for it. You call."

"Heads," said the soldier, even before he knew it.

The coin fell to the thick Turkish rug, tails uppermost. Bradney looked at it exultantly. He was freed now from any fear that he, too, had not played the game generously.

From where he stood the general could not see the coin. But the light in the younger man's eyes and the smile on his face told the story. The bronzed face turned to a queer yellow and there was a bit of a blue tinge about his lips.

Bradney saw that the soldier had received a death blow. But he braced himself and looked the American in the face without animosity.

"Thank you," he said quietly. "I lose."

Bradney looked at him for a moment in silence. He had never before realized an affection that was not almost wholly passion. He felt instinctively that this was above and beyond him.

There was a new note of respect in the boy's voice when he picked up the coin and turned to the other.

"No, sir," he said, "it was heads. You win."



THREE'S no doubt that women get pleasure out of lying to their husbands. But they get greater pleasure out of wondering what their husbands would have done if they had told the truth.

THE FLIRT

By John Hamilton

I HAD imbibed eleven cocktails when I saw her.

She was sitting at a table opposite the one my wife and I occupied.

She had long green eyes and an enticing mouth and soft shoulders and arms that were faultless.

I wondered if she would smile at me if I nodded.

She did.

The radiance of her smile suffused my body with a warm glow.

In my excitement I tipped over a glass of wine.

I saw her lean over and speak to a drab little man by her side.

It was at that moment that I heard my wife's voice in my ear.

With horror I realized that I had been flirting with her reflection in a distant mirror.



THE IDEAL DEATH-BED

By Lars Rue

AT my death-bed I want a man playing a ukulele;

I want a fat blonde singing "Pretty Baby,"

And someone telling Ford jokes.

When I'm dying the air must be filled

With stale cigarette smoke and the scent

Of cheap face powder

Like that sniffed in cabarets.

It would be desirable to have

Relatives sitting solemnly by

With sad faces and slowly shaking heads

Making a dolorous scene.

I want someone to read to me

Spring poetry and essays by college professors

And newspaper criticisms on the drama.

All these I want at my death-bed.

All these and other things that bore me.

Then I will be glad

To die.



THE SCANDAL AT TOAD-IN-THE-HOLE

By Maurice Joy

I

ONE would be hard put to it to explain how the idea of romance first fastened its mordant fangs on poor Miss Falconridge. She didn't read nor, as far as anyone knew, think of anything but her many philanthropic activities. But for some time the change in her was apparent and the subject of critical gossip. Her own conversation continued to be, as it had always been, confined to the yea, yea and the nay, nay proper to a God-fearing and extremely modest woman who had passed her fortieth year without exciting a suspicion of scandal.

However obscure the cause of the change its manifestations were beyond question. It was not merely the ribbon here or there that shewed its head on her black gowns like a too greatly daring flower in March. There crept into her manner a certain lack of austerity which in such a hallowed atmosphere could only be called downright levity. It was the curate who first became aware of it; he couldn't define what he felt but he ceased to take tea with her oftener than three times a week. The doctor found his bills agreeably growing because of many little ailments suddenly developed. The postman was less happy in the fact that it was Miss Falconridge herself who now habitually met him at her spotless gate instead of the budding young maid who grinned at him through the window.

But because the doctor, the postman and the curate never exchanged con-

fidences, the full significance of these things was not realized until the conviction that Miss Falconridge must be using henna on her hair swept through our community. Of course it sounded incredible at first, but no news that was so deliciously spiteful could remain incredible for long. The only thing left to say was:

"What will she do next?"

What she did was to disappear for a while; and when she returned the transformation was complete. It was not merely her gowns that were astonishing; her clothes line became such a centre of admiration that the rector gravely discussed its shamelessness with his wife. And when suddenly she pensioned off her aged coachman and took a handsome fellow in his place, the scandal assumed such proportions that the curate entirely discontinued his visits to tea; and it became abundantly clear to the rector that only her sense of social fitness could save Miss Falconridge from utter damnation.

"How thankful we should be, dear!" he said to his wife, "that we have such strong social distinctions in England. They are the very pillars of Christianity."

Unfortunately this very consolatory reflection was nullified immediately by his wife's reminder that Miss Falconridge was Irish.

"And you know, my dear, one can never quite tell what they will do."

I think it wouldn't have surprised the good lady if Miss Falconridge had appeared in a pair of pink pajamas, riding a pig to church. Her wise re-

mark about the Irish soon passed from mouth to mouth and there was a general feeling that everything had been explained.

The community, now that the essential sanctity of English home life would not have to bear the stigma of the imminent sin, settled down to watch eagerly the process of damnation.

The conviction was strong in our village that the wages of sin is death. Wherever Miss Falconridge's name was mentioned the phrase was inevitable. The grocer murmured it when she passed by while he was sanding the sugar; the doctor making pills of bread and water fondled it; and even the rector chanted it under his breath as he deposited Miss Falconridge's cheque for pew rent to the credit of his account.

But alas for them! Death also proved to be a moral snob and avoided Miss Falconridge as thoroughly as any of them.

The squire was appealed to to cancel her lease, but being rather a bluff old roysterer the story merely struck him as worth repeating in London. His action would have made a Radical of the rector's wife but for the fact that the nonconformist minister's widow was one already.

However, there is very little pleasure in punishing people if they show no sign of suffering, and the persecution of Miss Falconridge in time lost its zest.

Beyond some annoyance at losing her maid (whom, by the way, she quickly replaced with a most flirtatious young Cockney damsel), Miss Falconridge seemed to be far happier than she had ever been.

Of course she was naturally furious when she had to abandon the Christmas party she gave every year to the poor children of the parish, but she blossomed forth so irretrievably gay and debonair as she drove around behind her handsome coachman that even the Ladies' Committee of Toad-in-the-Hole found a seductive delight in murmuring Babylon. Not as a corporate body, of course, but, as they did

all things, discreetly. Indeed it seemed for a while as if the rector's wife might be one day left perched alone on her own hillock but for a piece of news that rekindled the ancient wrath.

Briefly it was this—*Miss Falconridge was to have a baby.*

II

ONE does not need to dwell on the painfulness of what followed. Miss Falconridge was entirely without shame and the community was entirely without mercy.

More than once the rector's wife declared that it was with difficulty she was able to keep her hands off the dainty lady, and Miss Rebecca Cholmondeley (whose breed of dachshunds was famous and who was, besides, a cousin of Lord Bludlington) finally prevailed on the rector himself to visit Miss Falconridge and to remonstrate with her.

The result, I regret to say, was most unpleasant, for the reverend gentleman found himself pitched head, neck and crop through Miss Falconridge's front door by the irate and handsome coachman, while Miss Falconridge herself, in a bewitching peignoir, looking as demure and devilishly wise as one of Watteau's ladies, watched his discomfiture.

The sequel would have been an action in the courts had not the curate pointed out how extremely distasteful the resulting scandal would be.

Into the tumult which followed this conspicuous episode there fluttered soon afterwards a dove-like copy of *The Times*, which announced:

d'HELLENCOURT — FALCONRIDGE.
In Paris on February 3, 1912, Charles d'Helencourt to the Honorable Emily Falconridge, only surviving daughter of the late Lord Bingle.

The Times did not reach Toad-in-the-Hole until the late afternoon, and the rector was in the habit of going to fetch it himself. He always began by reading the births, marriages and deaths column—it was sure to be distinguished

—and his eye immediately fell on the item I have quoted.

January third!

His training had been classical and he became muddled in his calculations, but meeting Miss Rebecca Cholmondeley that lady immediately placed the date . . . the marriage had taken place in the brief interval between Miss Falconridge's leaving the parish a symphony in grey and black and returning like a Hungarian rhapsody. That is, of course, if the marriage really had taken place!

Miss Cholmondeley lifted her eyebrows, but the rector pointed out that there was a dangerous approach to socialism in doubting the word of a baron's second daughter.

Miss Cholmondeley, who had developed a certain freedom of speech through her contiguity to dachshunds and the problems relating thereto, said stuff and nonsense and where was the man d'Hellencourt anyway?

The rector avoided this aspect of the problem and went home to his wife, who promptly decided that the whole community owed an apology to Miss Falconridge, wished to goodness he (the rector) had not allowed her and her friends to jump to such hasty conclusions and counselled him to lose no time before going to see the vindicated lady.

"I shall go tomorrow, dear, and offer my apologies and congratulations," he assured her with an air of one who is about to confer a great favor. "Of course I gravely disapprove of her marrying a Frenchman. I'm sure he is immoral."

The rector, I have suggested previously, was not an acute man nor was he one who ever hunted events back to their remote psychological causes.

Thus in after life he never realized that the events of the succeeding months were directly traceable to this remark.

He was not sensitive enough to feel the subtle change that had been working in the parish ever since Miss Falconridge had cut the painter between

her skiff-like soul and the ship of human respect. No one was able to view sin in quite the old way when the second daughter of a lord was found wandering in the gardens of desire. That most alluring of Satan's serpents—a spirit of adventure—had reared his lovely head and whispered into many ears.

Had Miss Falconridge really made such a mess of her life? Heaven was sometimes very far from Toad-in-the-Hole and the rustle of Miss Falconridge's silks was very near!

Be wary, good ladies, ye tread on dangerous ground.

Who was Charles d'Hellencourt? Not the coachman surely! Yet, by all the gods, it was indeed he. With wonderful alacrity Miss Falconridge forgave the rector, the rector's wife, Miss Rebecca Cholmondeley and all else who had cut her, and at a party soon afterwards, introduced to them all Monsieur Charles d'Hellencourt, of an excellent family, who had joined with her in this somewhat irresponsible but, they must admit, exceedingly diverting conceit of hers and assumed for the nonce the proletarian rôle of coachman. A little abashed, they forgave the diverting conceit (and indeed what may not be forgiven to the only surviving daughter of a lord who has the misfortune to be Irish?) more promptly because Miss Rebecca Cholmondeley, whose mind through a long association with dachshunds had acquired a strong flair for sentiment, enthusiastically cried out:

"Amy, dear, it is a most engaging romance!"

Ill-omened word—romance—for the candidate parish of Toad-in-the-Hole!

III

MONSIEUR CHARLES D'HELLENCOURT spoke English with a "soup-song" of an accent according to the rector's wife, quite a pleasant *soupson*, you will understand, almost enough to give him a romantic air even if his fine manner had not already given him one. With

what exquisite grace did he not kiss the hand of the rector's wife (leaving a thrill of delight in those unaccustomed fingers) or stroke Miss Cholmondeley's dachshund until the message thus wirelessed made that commanding lady blush like an *ingénue*!

How uninspiring beside him was the rector, how prosy the doctor, how insipid even the curate around whose head lingered a not unromantic legend of his having kissed a tousled scullery maid during his last term at Keble!

It was inevitable that when our annual theatricals came to be organized Monsieur d'Hellencourt should take a leading part, and it was only fair restitution that we should choose a play written especially by Madame d'Hellen-

court for our offering.

It was a modest and gentle play in which, as an aged philanthropist, Monsieur d'Hellencourt played a very old part in a very young way. He had three daughters, played by the rector's wife, the curate's elder sister (who kept house for him) and Miss Cholmondeley.

He also had grandchildren, but their parts were very small.

Monsieur d'Hellencourt's daughters were all good to him and he was very good to them, so that affection ran riot; and when his arm was not around the rector's wife, he was planting a kiss on Miss Cholmondeley's stately cheek or stroking the hair of the curate's elder sister.

Madame d'Hellencourt with her baby carriage in the wings, directed the scenes with an absence of jealousy which did infinite credit to her love of art and charity.

What tenderness Monsieur d'Hellen-

court revealed! What subtle images did not three ladies cherish who left that glamorous stage for a rector, a curate and a litter of dachshunds? The heart of Toad-in-the-Hole was burning on the altar and its perfume rose adoringly to the nostrils of the godlike d'Hellencourt.

A little while of exquisite tender-

ness, a little while of bold adoration and then the conviction settled with each

of the three ladies that Monsieur d'Hellencourt loved her and her alone. Had the rector been capable of suspecting that any man could have been loved in preference to himself he might have wondered why his wife had suddenly taken to reading Tennyson, an emotional license which she condoned to herself by the memory that he was the favorite poet of our late queen. The curate *did* find that his clothes were not kept so specklessly as erstwhile, but no young man suspects his elder sister of "that sort of thing."

As for the dachshunds being primitive creatures they understood everything but could explain nothing.

I am doing the three ladies a grave injustice if I have conveyed that their intentions were otherwise than strictly honorable.

It was probably the security they each felt in the knowledge of this that led them into situations deplorably compromising, from the scandalous consequences of which they escaped only by sheer luck. So reckless an admirer as d'Hellencourt the world has rarely known.

Rare, too, is such complacency as Madame d'Hellencourt showed in a situation which was absolutely clear to her, however obscure it was to the rest of the village. In what jealousy there was, she did not share. She was amused by the contretemps into which his tripartite adventure used to lead her husband, and her humor was as exquisite as the glow of sunlight on ivory—a thing not to be touched upon lest the shadow of the commonplace obscure it. I remember walking with her one day towards the village to meet Charles, who had been in London for a couple of days. As we came near the post-office we saw him in the distance, but at the same moment Madame d'Hellen-

court drew my attention to the post-office door. There, seemingly engaged in pleasant conversation, were our three arch-gossips.

It required no great perspicuity to know that each of them had gone there in the hope of intercepting Charles on

his return, and it was amusing to see their embarrassed air as they greeted him. The man was perfect. He didn't delay two minutes with them, yet as we joined the group I could see that he had managed to suggest to each of them that she was the one woman who really understood him. I watched Madame d'Hellencourt under my eyelids; never did scabbard conceal a subtler sword.

And so from day to day the infatuation grew and gradually produced an undercurrent of suspicion in the village. A churchwarden spoke of it to the rector and that good man after striking down this insulter of his wife with a riding crop went home and asked her if there was any truth in the accusation. The curate demanded a solemn assertion of innocence from his sister. Only the dachshunds took the situation quite philosophically. The three ladies, quite confident of their own virtue, although somewhat annoyed, enjoyed secretly the spice of adventure.

But they were, of course, compelled to become more furtive in their ways, and it was thus that they developed the habit of taking shy little walks with Monsieur d'Hellencourt, not by accident, but by arrangement. Their capacity for intrigue grew with the keenness of the struggle. And Madame d'Hellencourt smiled and smiled: had you seen her in those days meet any of the ladies who had once so cruelly used her name, you would have marveled that the world could produce a heart so overflowing with charity.

IV

So passed the winter and the warmth of spring came into the air. One night the moon was shrouded and there was not a light to be seen in Madame d'Hellencourt's house. A time for evil deeds! Had you gone to the post-office you would have been told that Madame d'Hellencourt was away on a visit and had left her husband behind.

Suddenly the silence was broken by

a low whistle, the invariable signal of a rector's wife on a rampage; and as the sound died out, a door on the north side of the house was opened quietly and a lady hooded and silent slipped by. She found her way to the study and sat there with her heart in her mouth until d'Hellencourt, dapper and gracious, joined her.

"I shouldn't have come," she said. "I know I shouldn't have come."

"Nonsense," he reassured her. "A little supper, that's all, and you'll be home before the rector returns."

Scarcely had he relieved her of her cloak when he left her suddenly and went to a door on the south side of the house, opened it, and admitted another lady, who slipped quietly by—but not to the study. You will have guessed who she was and who was the third hooded lady that from still another point of the compass was approaching and presently arrived.

So there they were, unconscious of each other's presence in three dimly lighted rooms that gave on a darkened dining-room, three agitated ladies keen of tongue and tasteful for the first time of illicitly perilous dalliance which, truth to tell, they did not find altogether good. They were nervous and apprehensive as Charles excused himself from each in turn to fetch some wine from the cellar, he said. And each was at last relieved as she heard from beyond the door:

"Come, dear, everything is ready."

They opened the doors expecting to step into a prudent light, but the darkness bewildered them. Then the incomparable d'Hellencourt switched on the electric light and their eyes fell first on a table set abundantly for five and then on each other. To each in turn d'Hellencourt with perfectly suave courtesy bowed low.

"I pray you, ladies," he said with that *soupcion* of an accent which made his voice so flavorous, "be seated. Madame d'Hellencourt will be down in a moment."

At that moment Madame d'Hellencourt entered.

"So glad I got back in time," she said. "I'm *so* delighted to see you all."

They sat down. What else was there to do with a shattered reputation and an excellent appetite?

I shall only add my opinion that, as an aid to a fond revenge, Madame

d'Hellencourt had done excellently well to marry a poor countryman of her own who, though a failure on the stage (through an excess of intelligence, no doubt) was an excellent actor off it, and whose manners are still spoken of wistfully in Toad-in-the-Hole.



SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA

By Jacques Yarnell

HIS den, where he was reading, was the creation of an internationally famous firm of interior decorators. The volume upon his knees was a beautiful and expensive one, the result of months of painstaking labor on the part of one of the world's greatest bookbinders. His rich apparel, as well as his supremely artistic surroundings, bore ample evidence to the indubitable fact that he was a man of great wealth. Also, he was evidently a man of culture, for the scholarly book delighted him so that he exclaimed delightedly: "By golly! this son of a gun sure is *some* writer!"



SONG

By Marjorie Muir

I HAVE held my life too lightly,
Gained perdition through a kiss;
Gave my lips to each newcomer;
Finding each time sweeter bliss.

I am older now, and wiser,
Grown dignified and tall,—
But my heart thrills just as gaily,
And I've not reformed at all!



EVERY woman dreams with half-closed eyes of the man who shall some day ask her to be his wife. But every woman goes about the task of finding a husband with her eyes wide open.



MANY a scandal, if traced to the bottom, would seriously embarrass the principals by its innocence.

CONTEMPORARY TOXICOLOGY

By L. M. Hussey

I

STRONGLY pertinent to the subject in hand, and incidentally and interestingly demonstrating how in times of war-prejudice the ordinarily impersonal march of science is obstructed by race-hatred, is the erudite paper of M. Quig, recently refused publication in the *Comptes rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Sciences*. Monsieur Quig undertook and carried to a masterful consummation the strictly scientific discussion of toxicology in a novel phase. Specifically he essayed to show just those provocations and injuries for which poisoning is a just and desiderate requital.

M. Quig had gathered his material from a lifetime of endeavour. His paper was the condensed result of his laborious research. But by the leading journal of the sciences in his native land it was refused publication through an utterly erroneous notion, absurdly sprung into the minds of the editors, that M. Quig was really a German, a secret representative of Rhenish chemical manufactories, and that his mission was the introduction into France of cheap and inferior German-made poisons, to German profit and French ill. Is Quig a French name? we find them asking. It has a German sound, it mouths with a Teutonic smack! . . .

These the fatuous beguilements whereby a genuine work of science was withheld from the scientific world. . . .

For our public, however, that is, the intelligent and unprejudiced section of it to which alone M. Quig could hope to address himself, there must exist a vast interest in his findings. I do not at this

moment propose a translation or even a fairly comprehensive survey of his paper, but I shall go over for you, tabulated for your immediate understanding, the chiefest of his discoveries.

These then, presented in the form afore-determined and announced, are the provocations which may justify a man in feeding, injecting or in any other manner introducing a poison into a woman.

1. Making tiresome and inopportune demands for amorous politeness.
2. Being indifferent to amorous politeness.
3. Wearing, after sufficient warning, electric curlers, kids, or other paraphernalia for the production of waves in otherwise waveless hair, the same being assumed in the evening before retiring and worn throughout the night.
4. Purchasing and using cotton hose when the funds for the silk article are provided (or effecting similar falsifications), the extra money thus spuriously acquired being employed in witnessing Francis X. Bushman.
5. Playing the nocturnes of Chopin upon the piano.
6. Playing the piano.
7. Thin women.
8. Fat women.
9. Women with bald eyebrows.
10. In general, *any* woman.

M. Quig, having learnedly delivered himself of the research embodied in the foregoing tabulation, does not then take up the other side, namely, the causes sufficient for the poisoning of males. He tells us frankly that this problem has not yet received the attention he desires to put upon it before delivering himself *ex cathedra* and so he requires that we await his further study. In a few intimations, tentatively put forth, he offers the dicta that extermination by poison is justified in the case of all

tall, dark men with handsome eyes, whose temples are flecked with grey; evangelists; signers of prohibition petitions—but here he pauses in his fascinating intimations and tells us no more.

At any rate, M. Quig's work is singularly opportune. There is a growing sentiment for more knowledge on the subject of which he treats a specific phase. People of refinement, those with a feeling for the delicacies and the elegancies of life, are making a greater and greater use of poisons, for not only their special, but their ordinary and routine killings. The man or woman who at present employs an automatic pistol or a jeweled stiletto cannot now be considered *au fait*. We have nothing to say of meat-cleavers. Meat-cleavers never were, nor are they likely to be, assumed as the weapon of any save the vulgar. And a suggestion of a contemporary that there be utilized the disposing qualities of three-inch demountable canon displays a lack not only of delicacy, but of practicability.

A poison, employed with art and learning, is the modern mode. It will be meet to consider first those poisons most affected by the astute and refined. And from this to the more strictly esthetic considerations.

II

AMONG the genuinely discriminate there is a steadily growing predilection for those poisons of organic origin, not stewed up in any laboratory, but fashioned naturally in the course of animal and sometimes vegetable metabolism. Particularly the toxins elaborated during bacterial growth find a great favour—it is safe to say their vogue among the educated is unsurpassed by any other single class.

One cannot make purchase of bacterial toxins, for they have not yet been commercialized. This, however, is not a deterrent to their popularity and use, since there is a subtle satisfaction in their preparation by the individual purposing their employment, and the ex-

quisite variety of death which they afford can never fail to sound a chord of response in the cultured mind.

In the preparation of bacterial poisons (*toxins*, more scientifically put) there is the first necessity of procuring the germ, the bacillus, the coccus, the microbe of whatever species it may be. For this initial step it is well to have recourse to the family physician. Through his connections with private cases, hospitals and bacteriologic laboratories, it is possible for him to secure with facility any germ of immediate desire.

The organism is grown on suitable culture media, usually the Japanese seaweed known as *agar-agar*, tubes of which, ready for planting, may be had of your dealer. Unless you are outlining a considerable series of this sort of killing, the expense of a gas or electric incubator is unnecessary. The tubes, plugged with cotton and capped with rubber, may be carried in the inner vest pocket, or strapped to the arm or leg in the dainty chrome-leather holders now being offered for this purpose at the best stores. The normal heat of the body, thus communicated to the tubes, furnishes an ample incubation. This is judged sufficient when the culture growth has spread itself in large and visible colonies over the surface, or, in the case of anaerobic cultures, under the surface, of the agar.

The germs are then washed off with a weak salt solution, being poured into a glass vessel. From here they are filtered through a Berkfield filter—a simple apparatus, the technique of which yields itself readily—and the clear lack-germ filtrate constitutes the toxin, the poison thrown off by the bacterial growth!

Until ready for administration it is best to preserve this in amber glass vials with three per cent of trikresol added as a preservative.

There is, naturally, the matter of the germ to be selected. Just now the *B. Tetanus toxin* is considered fashionable, and it is entertaining, anyway, to observe your victim die of lock-jaw. Of

course, this is the really only appropriate toxin for a garrulous woman.

The sole drawback to *B. Tetanus toxin* lies in its somewhat rare occurrence. It is suggested that the experimenter secure a dozen or more infants, of three months or less, and puncture them with suitably rusty nails. One or more are certain to acquire the disease and from a freshly developed case the germ is of no difficulty of attainment.

After *B. Tetanus*, the toxins elaborated from the spirillum of Asiatic Cholera meet with favour. Bubonic plague is esteemed, but difficult, surely, to secure. Travellers to the Orient should lay in a supply against future requirements. The toxins of *B. Typhosus* have a certain value, but lack a desiderate surety in their action.

Staphylococcus albus, aureus and *citrius*, *B. Pertussus*, all the *diplococci*, the *spirochaeta* (or *treponema*) *pallida*, and the uncertain toxic offal of the *protozoa* are considered vulgar and are never to be employed.

Passing from the toxic elaborations of bacteria we find the venom of poisonous reptiles meeting a considerable and a possibly growing esteem. Extracted from the poison ducts of numerous snakes, they are marketed in little mauve capsules with an etched label bearing an entertaining representation of the producing serpent. It cannot be said that these toxins are having any very wide employment. In the past they have been chiefly affected for self-poisonings by languorous women, given to reclining on divans and desirous of emulating Cleopatra, but without sufficient initiative to train an asp.

Before passing to the older and better known toxins, a brief mention must be made of the synthetic poisons, simulating ptomaines, now being developed in the research laboratories devoted to this work. The fascinating aspects of the poisons, or more specifically ptomaines, evolved in food has long drawn the eye of the initiated.

But how to make a use of these? To extract them remains almost impossible and their production is very uncertain.

Now, however, following in the footsteps of Emil Fisher and Kossel and their methods for the separation of the monoamino acids and the amino acid esters of the proteins, there have been built up, artificially, in the laboratory, a series of synthetic ptomaines, sure in action and charming in their results.

Briefly, the investigators have taken such hydroxyamino acids as diaminotrihydroxydodecanic acid and breaking the double bond at the hydroxyl group, have introduced into the chain cyclic nitrogenous derivatives, with the ultimate production of the artificial ptomaine.

The esthetic charm of observing a death by ptomaines is certain to spread their use and bring them into a considerable favour.

But, to draw to a conclusion of this phase, there are still many, many adherents to the old, tried toxins. They appeal to the conservative, there is a tradition and refinement about them to which all the newer poisons cannot attain and the gentleman of the old school, the member of a really First Family and jealously cherishing the older order, refuses to relinquish them.

To those with a leaning toward the spectacular and the somewhat outre, phosphorus has its champions. It is administered best in chocolate creams, imbedded in a paraffine capsule. A demise by this agent is keenly interesting to a certain type of mind. The subject undergoes a series of acrobatic convulsions and there accompanies a golden jaundice of the skin, rather beautiful than otherwise.

But most spectacular is the final phenomenon.

This is only visible in a dark room; therefore, phosphorus must always be administered so death will occur in the evening. From the throat of the subject appears a beautiful chemi-luminescence, an aura of ghostly fire, like a will-o'-the-wisp settling ghoulishly upon the lips of the dead. It is exquisitely lovely; it fully repays the difficulties inherent in the administration of this antique poison.

And there is mercuric chloride. Some maintain that this poison has been vulgarized, but it has still its staunch supporters. To many there is nothing more delightful than the observation of the case of quick nephritis which this drug engenders. The puffing of the hands and feet, the edematous eyes, the panted breathing, dying almost to a no-respiration, the internal corrosion, the degenerating kidney, the ultimate coma—who is to say that the fascination of *these* is soon to die?

And there are the alkaloids—the brucine, atropine, hyoscyamine, narcotine and et cetera. These, too, have their friends. . . .

III

FROM the coldly scientific discussion of poisons, we come now to considerations more directly concerned in poisoning as an *art*. But at once it is discovered that this art, like all the veritably esthetic, has a scientific basis of its own, and is not the child of whim, fashion and caprice.

And there comes up again, in all its scintillant glow, the name of M. Quig. . . .

It is some of the earlier research of M. Quig which demands our immediate attention, but of a calibre no less brilliant and erudite than his more recent labours. With a patience unbelievably tireless he has collected his material, examined statistics, toiled hours in the psychologic laboratories, and sacrificed his rest and his time to the purpose of general enlightenment.

And what he does for us in this earlier work is to make a classification of women, on an entirely original system, and proceed to show the specific toxins suitable to the various classes. Sometime in the future we may expect M. Quig to do the same for men and when this is accomplished the art of the toxin will be complete.

M. Quig's work appeared first in the *Berichte der Deutschen Chemische Gesellschaft* and later, vested in a much mixed translation, in the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*. The trans-

lator, imperfectly acquainted with the German tongue, made many ludicrous errors, such as translating the word *malen* as "to mill," and in brief, creating excessive confusion. So it may safely be asserted that the résumé to follow is the first correct presentation of M. Quig's work in the English tongue.

In making his classification of women, M. Quig, as would be expected, develops extraordinary originality. Says he, "Women have been classified as dark and light, blonde and brunette, short and tall, thin and fat, vivacious and languorous, warm and cold, and so on and so on. But none of these is scientific for none of them strikes to a noumenal basis. To say a woman is dark or light is to mention simply a symptom, not a cause. Startling as it may seem our present classification is nothing more than a nomenclature of symptomatology and the basis of all is to be had in a neglected feature, no less an organ indeed than the never-mentioned Nose! (*nie-gesprochene-Nase!*)"

Noses, says M. Quig, are the determining factor of all women, and from a duly scientific measurement of the nose all other features may be predicted and understood.

The savant mensurates noses with acute scientific accuracy. By means of the vernier slide-caliper, micrometric spherometer and a special density apparatus for determining the specific gravity of noses *in situ* devised by himself, M. Quig has made nasal measurements certain to last for all time. The difference of a millimenter in length or breadth he finds has the utmost effect on the character of the woman—it would be impossible in our present space to deliver his findings in detail. But he has developed certain general laws and they may at once be recited.

1. *The woman with the long nose, thin at the bridge and muscularly active at the nostrils.* She is, says M. Quig, always dark, her hair tends toward black, although it is sometimes a burnt brown. Invariably her tongue is vi-

triolic and she has a certain gift of scathing eloquence in denunciation. Since her *levator Labii superioris alaeque Nasi*, having its insertion in the wing of the nose, is always of a superior development, it is interesting to observe the flare and collapse of the nostrils of this sort of woman when in anger. She should be poisoned by a slow, but violent toxin in order that her gift of denunciation may be utilized for your entertainment as she progresses to her death. Notice as she curses you that her phillipics are hurled at the moments of greatest pain; therefore, the more painful the toxin, the more interesting will be her taking off. M. Quig suggests sulphuric acid and caustic potash as suitable.

2. *The woman with the large, classic nose, straight and not at all sharp.* Her hair tends toward a light brown, although occasionally she is blonde. In stature, she is tall, masterful in demeanour and cold and unresponsive. She resents familiarity and is in consequence an excellent subject for poisoning, for once she has been informed that a toxin has been administered, her ire rises at the presumption of it. Give her a moderately slow poison with no particularly preliminary pain, that is, not enough to incapacitate her, for she is only interesting in the early moments of her realization and her actual demise has no special features of entertainment. Choose to tell her of the poison she has swallowed in a sound, heavily furnished room. It is enlivening to observe her break furniture in her initial rage, but the observer must attend to the precaution of wearing a suit-of-mail.

3. *The woman with the straight, keen, tragic nose.* Give her a poison not too painful, but quick. She is always dark and melancholy and her death speeches are interesting. She has

rather too much a tendency to quote Shakespeare and recite malapropos soliloquies from "Hamlet," but an adroit handling can abort this. Let her meet her death in a high-walled chamber, rather bare and barren, with gusts of damp air blowing through it, fluttering tall candles in melancholy sticks. . . .

4. *The woman with the small, indeterminate and rather melted nose.* The wearer is invariably blonde. She has no brains whatever and it is uninteresting to poison her. Administer something sudden and get her out of the way with as little ceremony as possible. Sometimes, however, she makes a rather pretty picture in death—put a rose in her hand in the center of which have been dropped a few minums of hydrocyanic acid. Smelling it, she will die. Bury her in a bird's-eye maple coffin and do not remove the rose. It sometimes is a quite charming tableau.

5. *The woman with the heavy, aquiline, passionate nose.* Her colour is ordinarily dark, she adores the masterful male, and death by a suitable toxin is an amorous rapture. Give her a poison inducing languor—hyoscine, say—and choose a room paneled in redwood, dim, dusky and mysterious. The walls should be hung with dark tapestries and a little incense or a few joss-sticks should be burnt in an urn. She prefers to die upon a divan heaped with silks and a kiss, long, passionate and clinging must not be denied her at the end.

And thus M. Quig makes a conclusion.

This article is not a pretence to an exhaustive study. It is intended more as a stimulant than anything else and it is hoped that its perusal will advance something the cause of the toxin, artistically and scientifically administered, and will reduce the vulgar number of stranglings, knifings and bullet deaths.



THOUGHTS BEFORE KILLING ONE'S WIFE

By Robert Garland

I HAVE the most adorable of wives. She is pretty; Filippo Lippi would have worshipped her. Her eyes are soft and wistful, her hair curls alluringly. She is loyal, affectionate and as gay as a barrel-organ on a winter afternoon; she is tender, and, when need be, she is sad with the sadness of an autumnal sunset. Yet, in spite of this, I intend to murder her.

My wife is near perfection. She greets me with a smile when I return from the office; when I depart in the morning she throws a kiss after me. Yet I intend to murder her.

I wrote a note and left it on her desk. "Dear Wife," I said, "I am leaving you. I cannot stand you any longer. You are too perfect. You are too sweet, too tender, too concerned with my welfare. Our life is far too calm. I crave mad magenta moments. If you'd only quarrel with me! If you'd only throw something at me, or poison my food, or bite me on the back of my neck, I should be happy. But as it is, I cannot stand the eternal drabness of our existence. Therefore, I am leaving you forever."

"That will start something," I told myself.

"That will keep me from killing her," said I.

All day at the office I gloated over my return. Time after time I visioned my reception. "She will hit me with the pianola," I said; "she will throw the gas-range at my head. We shall live, thank God! Mad magenta moments will be ours. She will scream. She will tear her hair. She will scratch my

eyes out, nothing less. The everlasting drabness of our lives will be pierced by a crimson shaft of adventure. What an evening it will be!" I laughed aloud in happy anticipation.

I went home with joy in my heart. A song was on my lips, a crimson hope was in my heart. My wife met me at the door, and her eyes were soft and wistful, her hair curled alluringly.

"I'm so sorry, dear," said she, "the cook has left and the housemaid is sick in bed and the furnace-man fell down and broke his collarbone, but I don't mind. I fixed the furnace, carried out the ashes, cooked you a lovely dinner, and I cleaned the entire house with the vacuum cleaner. I even found time to darn your socks and to alter that blue silk shirt of yours."

She smiled sweetly, ever so sweetly, and once again I thought how Filippo Lippi would have worshipped her. As she helped me off with my overcoat she kissed me on the ear.

"My God," I demanded, "didn't you get my note?"

She laughed, and the sound of her laughter was like a brook in early spring.

"Yes, my dear," the jade replied, "it was sweet of you. It made me smile the livelong day. You're getting to be quite a comedian. But come, dear, dinner will be cold."

She squeezed my hand and pushed me playfully toward the dining-room.

Now, what am I to do? I'll just have to murder her. A stab in the back is the only thing a dutiful wife will pay attention to. . . .

"PRÉSENTEZ ARMES!"

By Félicien Nacla

I

LA nuit allait finir; et une faible lueur à l'Est annonçait l'approche du jour. Dans le camp, on commençait à se réveiller, mais le réveil était silencieux, car on savait que la bataille serait chaude et chaque homme se demandait s'il n'allait pas voir son dernier levé de soleil.

Les deux régiments qui constituaient la brigade du général Mauricier formaient l'extrême-gauche de l'armée. Ils avaient marché la veille jusqu'à minuit, effectuant un long mouvement tournant pour tomber sur le flanc de l'ennemi à un moment donné. Les soldats étaient fatigués, mais pleins d'ardeur; ils avaient compris le rôle décisif qu'ils devaient jouer pour assurer la victoire.

Le temps était beau et doux.

Le général avait dormi une heure à peine. Il était assi sur une chaise de paille chauffant ses grandes bottes poudreuses à un feu de bivouac. Ses aides de camp s'empressaient autour de lui. On sellait les chevaux.

Une journée historique, glorieuse pour la France, était à son aurore.

A cet instant; un jeune sous-lieutenant presque imberbe, éclos de l'Ecole de Saint-Cyr depuis peu de jours, sortit de l'obscurité et apparut dans la lumière du feu de bivouac.

—C'est toi, Jean! dit le général.

Et il tendit une main affectueuse à son fils.

—Que veux-tu?

—Mon père, vous embrasser avant qu'on ait pris les armes!

—Ce n'est pas la peine, mon garçon! répondit le général d'un ton bourru qui

cachait mal une nuance d'émotion. Aujourd'hui je ne suis pas ton père, mais ton général. Je n'ai aucun ordre à te donner: va rejoindre ton régiment.

Le jeune officier rougit légèrement, fit le salut militaire et disparut; son père le suivit d'un regard tendre pendant quelques secondes; puis, se tournant vers son chef d'état-major, un vieux commandant à la moustache grise:

—Pauvre petit, fit-il, je l'ai mal reçu; mais ce n'est pas le moment de s'amollir en faisant du sentiment; ce soir, si nous sommes encore vivants tous deux, je l'embrasserai pour sa mère et pour moi!

Un coup de clairon retentit; on sonnait le réveil, et lentement les troupes s'alignèrent.

Derrière la brigade se trouvait un bouquet de bois où s'était établie l'ambulance: les régiments se placèrent en ordre de bataille, de façon à offrir le moins de profondeur possible aux canons, et on attendit.

Maintenant, il faisait grand jour. On apperçevait les lignes sombres de l'infanterie qui manœuvrait pour prendre ses positions. Aux rayons obliques du soleil, les baïonnettes étincelaient. Plus loin, les casques d'une division de cavalerie reluisaient; on voyait les éclairs des sabres.

La voix du canon se fit entendre, et un obus passa en sifflant au dessus des têtes; puis un autre tomba à quelques centaines de mètres en avant. L'artillerie ennemie réglait son tir et ses premiers coups isolés servaient à fixer la distance. Peu à peu, les projectiles arrivèrent avec plus de précision; l'un d'eux éclata au milieu du camp français; trois hommes tombèrent, et la terre but son premier sang.

Immobile sur son cheval qui dressait les oreilles, le général interrogait l'horizon avec sa lorgnette, attendant le signal convenu pour se lancer en avant. Sa haute silhouette se détachait au milieu de la vaste plaine. Il paraissait si calme, si confiant que les soldats se réconfortaient en le regardant; tous avaient les yeux fixés sur lui, car ils sentaient instinctivement que leurs existances se trouvaient liées, en cet instant, par un lien mystérieux à celle de leur chef.

Au bruit fait par l'obus tombant au milieu de ses troupes, le général avait tourné la tête.

— Allez dire aux colonels, crie-t-il à un aide de camp, de faire coucher leurs hommes par terre, ils seront moins exposés aux boulets.

L'officier partit au galop pour faire exécuter cet ordre.

Au commandement les soldats se couchèrent en se tapissant presque dans les sillons laissés par la charrue; ils se faisaient petits, soulevant à peine la tête pour tâcher de voir au loin.

Les officiers étaient restés debout voulant donner à leurs hommes l'exemple de leur attitude calme; devant chaque compagnie, le capitaine, le lieutenant et le sous-lieutenant se promenaient d'un pas lent mais ferme.

Le général épiait toujours le signal qu'il attendait pour lancer la brigade en avant.

Avec sa longue-vue, il suivait les péripéties du combat qui se livrait dans une petite ferme située à peu de distance.

Tout à coup le général fit un geste; il venait de distinguer le signal convenu.

— Debout! crie-t-il.

Et il regardait ses deux régiments qui se dressaient à l'appel de sa voix.

Enfin! on allait faire parler la poudre!

Les soldats s'excitaient à cette idée, ils avaient hâte de prendre le pas de charge.

Le général Mauricier jeta les yeux vers le point où il savait qu'était son fils, pour s'assurer qu'il n'était point blessé.

Il l'aperçut, tenant son épée, l'air radeau, savourant les espérances de la gloire,—et fut orgueilleux de cet enfant qui portait son nom et qu'il sentait le légitime héritier de ses épaulettes.

Avec cette rapidité de la pensée, qui revoit en une seconde tout le passé défilant devant elle, le général revécut sa jeunesse. Il retrouva le cortège riant des années de son printemps. Il distinguait dans la brume de ses souvenirs le berceau de ce fils si aimé, et il sentit une bouffée chaude de tendresse infinie.

Sa bouche s'ouvrait pour commander: "En avant!", lorsque ses yeux dirigés sur le sous-lieutenant demeurèrent fixes d'horreur.

Un boulet de canon venait de fracasser les deux jambes du jeune officier, qui tomba mourant sans pousser un cri.

Muet, le général assistait à cet horrible spectacle; il voyait mourir son fils, sans pouvoir même se précipiter pour l'embrasser encore une fois, car six mille hommes demandaient à la fierté, de sa contenance leur propre valeur.

De grosses larmes coulaient sur les joues du vieux soldat, seule marque extérieure imposée par la faiblesse du père au stoïcisme du chef.

Deux infirmiers s'étaient précipités pour emporter le mourant; le père contemplait sans bouger le lugubre spectacle.

Lorsque le funèbre cortège passa près de lui, le général de découvrit devant le sous-lieutenant, puis d'un accent terrible, qui n'avait rien d'humain:

— Faites présenter les armes!

— Présentez armes! répétèrent les colonels.

Et la brigade entière rendit au jeune officier exprimant le suprême honneur dû à son grade.

Celui qui allait mourir pour sa patrie reçut d'elle le plus solennel salut.

Alors, se redressant sur ses étriers, ivre de douleur et de sang, le général poussa, comme une sorte de rugissement, le cris de:

— En avant! . . . à la baïonnette!

Et la brigade enthousiasmée se lança vers l'ennemi.

THE FOLLIES OF 1917, B. C.

By George Jean Nathan

WHERE once the casual dominie, come incognito to the city for a fly at forbidden thrills and clandestine joys, was wont covertly to patronize the "Follies," a more sagacious creature he now hastens his steps towards the latest Biblical play and thereat and openly achieves for himself a threefold physiological inflammation and emotional bedevilment. For he has come to appreciate, this sly dog, that where it is a matter of what Mr. Frank Tinney calls "the genuwine hot stuff," the average so-called religious play makes one of the Ziegfeld exhibitions seem in comparison as tame as kissing one's grandmother.

By the simple device of changing the locale from Paris to Jerusalem, calling François something like Parsodias and Fleurette Borsippa or Jezebel, and liberally sprinkling the dialogue with thees and thous, the canny theatrical manager is able not only to get away with an unexpurgated version of a "Girl with the Whooping Cough," but, what is more to the point, able to hocus into his auditorium the vastly lucrative and sometime coy church element. For that other element, that element of more wonted theatrical predilection, the element in New York made up largely of Broadway vestals and Forty-second Street Platos, the announcement of a new Biblical play has come to be particularly rich in promise and fruity with expectations. For the Biblical play, in the theatrical argot of sensational sex punch, has—as these snoopers are well aware—long since taken the place left played-out and vacant by Charnion, Anna Held's eyes, Brieux and the Medical Review of Reviews, Al Reeves' Beauty Show, Paul Potter and the Princess Rajah.

The average Scriptural or religious play is built on the astute managerial theory that the best way in which to inspire an audience with pure and lofty thoughts and so bring that audience under greater submission to the will of Almighty God is to show the audience a ballet of semi-nude women, a scene in a pagan boudoir in which the hero is elaborately seduced by a passionate Babylonian lady, and either a flock of live sheep or the spectacle of a team of horses toting a papier-maché chariot over a treadmill. Where a farce by, let us say, Mr. Avery Hopwood, which causes the tender churchgoer to shield his eyes with his hands, shows nothing more epizootic than a married woman flirting with a man not her husband (both parties being fully clothed), the usual religious play, which he swallows whole, is pretty certain to disclose at least one spectacle of lavish concupiscence and wenching set in a frame of wholesale dishabille.

The essential commercial stratagem for oiling the churchgoer's hypocritical alimentary canal for the sufficiently smooth reception of the business is amazingly facile of execution. All that is necessary is, first, to have the hero hold up his hands in horror when the undressed ballet wiggles its torsos and shakes its legs in the wild bacchanale (this salves sufficiently the conscience of the churchgoer), and, second, to wind up the elaborate half hour's incandescent orgy of seduction with a minute or two bit showing the grievous repentance of the hero. Which, of course, to the soul with a sense of comic values, is much like passing out pamphlets at the conclusion of an half hour's crescendo hoochee-coochee exhibition proving by some vague scientific gentleman

that the hoochee-coochee is a preventive of appendicitis.

For years I have been brought by the regimen of my professional office to attend these Biblical and religious exhibitions and, with but two exceptions, I have yet to lay eye to one to which the citizen—I here use against our theatrical gentlemen their own fatuous phrase—"might take his wife or sister or sweetheart." From Henry Arthur Jones' "Saints and Sinners," with its clergyman's daughter deflowered by an army captain with whom she continues to live in sin, to "Marie-Odile," with its rape of the ingénue; from "Michael and His Lost Angel," with its duet of seductions, to the carbonaceous contortions of Pauline Frederick in "Joseph and His Brethren"; from the temptations of the flesh in "The Christian" and the courtesan market of "The Sign of the Cross" to the stripped Adam and Eve in the "Creation" of Coney Island; from the errant nun of "Sister Beatrice" to the Iris Bellamy air of John Luther Long's "Kassa"; from the prostitution of Wilkie Collins' "The New Magdalen" and Stuart Ogilvie's "Sin of St. Hulda" to the street-walker and big-busted Passion of Hobart's neo-morality "Experience"; from the biological excursions of Lady Sybil in "The Sorrows of Satan" to the harlotry of Wilson Barrett's "Daughters of Babylon," you will find quite the measure of lust of such as Georges de Porto-Riche or the Wedekind of "In Full Cry," from whose plays the ecclesiastic retreats with fingers clasping the nose. . . .

But this is no new thing. The two leading allegorical personages of the so-called Moral Plays—the religious drama of the sixteenth century—so one learns from "The Trial of Pleasure" (1567), "The Three Ladies of London" (1584), "All for Money" (1578), and "The Three Lords, etc." (1590), were, respectively, Concupiscence and Infidelity.

The Biblical play most recently offered the local churchgoer is named "The Wanderer" and is a version by Mr. Maurice V. Samuels of Schmidt-

bonn's "The Prodigal Son," originally produced by Reinhardt in Berlin. What we envisage here, according to the program, is the parable of the prodigal son as narrated in the Gospel of St. Luke. But what we actually envisage here is the parable of the prodigal son as narrated in the Gospel of Florenz Ziegfeld. In testimony whereof I take the liberty of quoting the following affidavit culled by Mr. James Huneker's alert little grandson from the leading metropolitan theatrical newspaper:

FUSSING "THE WANDERER" GIRLS

A favorite pastime these nights is to hold hands with the young women in "The Wanderer," who are obliged at the conclusion of the wild dance in the second act to fall prostrate over the edge of the stage, with their arms and heads waving in the faces of front-row patrons.

The legs, arms and shoulders of the frolicsome dancers are bared, and the spectacle of these young women all but falling into the laps of those in the front row appears to be alluring to even the most hardened first-nighters. Indeed, many of the male patrons of art à la Manhattan regard the number as providing a medium of horse-play such as is introduced in the "Balloon" number in "The Midnight Frolic."

Mr. ——, who is always alert to the best in the drama, occupied a seat in the first row on Friday night, and when a blonde young thing, stretched out on her back, waved her hands in his face, he slipped a cigar into one of them and a cigarette into the other.

In place of Miss Kay Laurell in her birthday suit, that erstwhile irresistible drawing-card of the "Follies," the management of this Biblical play offer by way of similar tremor and by way of inculcating in the audience a noble religious feeling, Mr. William Elliott without his clothes on. For this coup I have endeavored to find some justification in a copy of the Bible which my friend Mencken obligingly cabbaged for me out of a room in the Prince George Hotel, but my search through the paragraphs from eleven to thirty-two in the chapter fifteen has proved without fruit; and I must so make up my mind that the *capriccio*, like most such things in these Scriptural plays, was a something devised merely for profane box-office purposes, for all the world like

the Sadie Martinot dido in "The Turtle." Here, however, I beg of you please not to mistake me. If out of my professional duty I have to deposit an eye on such spectacles, I confess I would from a standpoint of pure esthetics, if nothing else, somewhat rather see the average young actor without his clothes on than with the sort of clothes on the average young actor is in the habit generally of wearing.

My point, though, is not this. What I object to is the condonation of promulgations of nudity in a Biblical play and the condemnation of the selfsame thing in a music show. Why the city officials profess to be shocked at the sight of the chorus girls' mere bare knees in the Winter Garden—and command the Shuberts to order thick stockings forthwith—and why these same Solons profess to be exalted at the sight of bare knees—to say nothing of bare umbilici and bare spank-spots—in any other stage exhibition so long as it elects to nominate itself a Biblical play is assuredly a subject for the student of the higher philosophy.

If you say to me that it is all a matter of time, place and the audience's mood and that nudity is less nudity in a religious play than in the Winter Garden, I answer you that the theory is, truth to tell, very catchy, but that, further than this, it is of the juiciest of pharisaisms. I should like to believe that Miss Olive Thomas coming out on the stage of "Ben-Hur" in sitz-bath attire provokes in me a holier and more godly impulse than when she comes out on the stage of the "Follies" in the same garb, but I confess that my mind is in such matters but a reluctant vessel.

The old story of the artist's model being one thing to the eye of the artist and quite another to the miscreant peeking in at the window fails, at least in the way sometimes offered, to fit the theatrical case. Were these so-called Biblical or religious plays works of art, or even second-rate works of art, one might take another view of the situation. But they are, more often than

not, the veriest pot-boilers, poised shrewdly against the portly purses of the pews. In the first-rate religious plays—plays like "Androcles" or Brieux's very beautiful and compelling "Faith" or Andreyev's incisive "Savva"—one will find no such palpable and tawdry box-office bait as scenes in Babylonian bagnios or hip-wiggling sirens or naked actors or soft-pillowed debauchery. The commercial failure of these respectable works of dramatic art and the commercial failure before them of like honourable efforts would seem, somewhat sadly, to indicate that the type of pewman who patronizes the playhouse is an even greater hypocrite than some of his critics have led us believe.

"The Wanderer" is handsomely put on and the direction, said to have come from the hand of Mr. David Belasco, is of a smooth adroitness. But it bears approximately the same relation to a religious spectacle that Mr. William A. Sunday bears to Cardinal Gibbons.

II

ONCE again, and for the second time in the present season, Miss Clare Kummer has provided several of my critical confrères with a considerable embarrassment. First with her "Good Gracious Annabelle" and now with her "A Successful Calamity" the lady has given the gentlemen a deal of trouble in explaining with sufficient lucidity to their clientele—and, what is probably more difficult, to themselves—how it is that the lady's plays have all the faults these critical gentlemen claim for them and yet amuse these critical gentlemen as plays with no faults at all have failed to. The resulting acrobatics have made up in spectacularity what they have lacked in accuracy. For, contrary to the seemingly prevalent critical notion that Miss Kummer's plays are (I quote the several gazettes) "diffuse," "formless," "loosely and carelessly knit" and "of an irresponsible and slipshod technique," the truth is that for all their

surface appearance of formlessness and technical infelicity they follow a very definite and symmetrical design. To say that the plays would be better plays were they of a more symmetrical construction is arbitrarily to say that the straight street of a city is a more lovely place to linger in than a crooked country lane.

Miss Kummer's plays, if the word formlessness must be used, are formless not in the sense that a bad piece of literature is formless, but in the sense that a good piece of literature—the "Weavers" of Hauptmann, say, or the "Peter Pan" of Barrie or, to descend in the scale, one or two of the farces of Hoyt—is formless. Formlessness is frequently not a fault, but a virtue rather of rich blossom. Consider, in fine, Strindberg's "Dream Play" . . . Chopin's sonata in B flat minor . . . the poetry of Yeats. . . .

The work of Miss Kummer, if it lacks technique, lacks technique in the sense that a little child dancing merrily to a springtime hurdy-gurdy lacks it—and, contrariwise, in the sense that Gertrude Hoffmann possesses it.

"A Successful Calamity" is a bland, civil and notably skilful embroidery of commonplace materials, illuminated with probably the prettiest light humour treasured by a woman writing at the present moment for the native stage. Not less happy than the selection of the manuscript is Mr. Arthur Hopkins' admirable staging of the play. This Hopkins is with each succeeding year becoming a more and more consequent fellow. Already he has revealed himself to be the most original and most interesting experimental producer in the American professional ranks. And now, with his abandonment of the conventional idea in stage direction—that meaty system for converting acting into a thing of rubber-stamps—he has, through this play mounted with no direction whatsoever in the accepted Broadway sense—added measurably to his stature as a producer of uncommonly good critical sense. The enactment of the play is excellent.

III

UPON the occasion of the production of Mr. Chesterton's "Magic" in the Little Theater of London, the author made a short speech at the conclusion of his play in which he said he feared it was a trifle amateurish. To which Mr. John Palmer, commenting subsequently in his critical columns in the *Saturday Review*, retorted, "Thank heaven for that! Not until we have a continuous stream of amateurish plays like 'Magic' shall we get a continuous breath of life into the English-speaking theater."

This little play of Chesterton's is theatrical entertainment of, if perhaps not the first, then certainly of the very highest second order. It is the Gospel of St. Matthew in terms of the prestidigitator Kellar—a philosophy of miracles in the ear of a Bernard Shaw listening by his mother's knee to a bedtime fairy tale. At once a happy blend of the naïve and the sophisticated, the manuscript is quick with interchange of broad humour and gentle fantasy, sprightly argumentative *riposte* and parry—a fencing, as it were, between Shaw and Barrie, with the foils tipped with rubber. And if the little play is not a great work in the sense that someone has described great works as being the arduous victories of great minds over great imaginations, it is still the victory of a sufficiently entertaining mind over a sufficiently lively imagination to make of it a play that sentimentalizes the thinking emotions into what is indeed a very pleasant and doubly welcome mood.

IV

"LILAC TIME," written in collaboration by Miss Jane Cowl, the actress, for her own use, may be described as the "Brown of Harvard" of war plays. It is a thing of pretty actors in soldiers' suits, periodic off-stage bass drum beats bursting in the air, promiscuous fervent handshaking of the bowed-head, I-understand-old-man species, a leading man with cheeks tanned by the make-up weather who swallows when

he makes love and who at great length in each act is eulogized as a hero for having performed some feat of bravery in the wings during the preceding act, a leading lady in peasant girl's dresses by Bendel who digs in the old trunk and sentimentally draws forth her mother's wedding veil, the playing of national airs as four stagehands make appropriate sounds beneath the window as of a regiment marching off to battle, the usual I-knew-your-father-young-man sympathetic old Major, and a veteran of the Franco-Prussian war now old and gray who gives an imitation of Henry Irving playing "Waterloo" and who, after suffering a sudden and complete physical collapse following an hysterical reminiscence of valorous bygone days, sinks into a chair and promptly crosses his legs. . . .

The scene of the play is laid in Berlitz, France, and the time is the present. Judging from the numerous outbursts of song on the part of the soldiers, now in solo, now in barbershop quartet grouped around a drinking table, it would seem that the author's conception of war is that it is something like going to college. The play, described upon the program as one "of youth and springtime," like so many other "plays of youth and springtime" presents us in the theater with the spectacle of a mere lad of forty-seven and his love for a slip of a girl of thirty-three or so, their moist-eyed animadversions on "the lilac time of youth" in the old garden at purple gelatine-slide time, the summoning of the lad to his country's service, the necessary postponement of the wedding that was to have been performed that very morning by the village Curé and the lowering of the curtain for a moment to indicate the passing of the young lady's virginity, the wistful looking out of the window for the lover's return with one hand clasping the baby clothes upon which the young lady has been sewing, the message that tells of the lover's home-coming, the Patricia - Collinge jumpings up and down, the second message that tells of the lover's fall in battle, the young

lady's tearful eyes and nose. . . .

Several years ago, upon reviewing Jerome K. Jerome's "Great Gamble" in the Haymarket Theater, I wrote that every once in so often some playwright addresses himself to achieve again the spirit and romance of Meyer-Förster's "Old Heidelberg," and that every once in so often the tilter comes unhorsed from the tourney. The address and the unhorsing are once again instanced in the case of "Lilac Time." The sentiment of "Old Heidelberg" was brewed out of an understanding of life and out of an understanding of literary composition sufficient to translate that understanding of life to the stage. It was not, like this "Lilac Time," a thing brewed rather out of a misunderstanding of life and out of an understanding of the showshop sufficient to translate that misunderstanding of life to the stage. Sentiment is not to be projected through the proscenium arch by a mere set representing a flower garden, a dimming of the border lights and Duparc on an off-stage violin.

V

OTHER performances. The Drama League's archeological presentation in the Republic of scenes from the puerile and paltry American plays of the yesterdays, the plays about which Mr. William Winter is still writing enthusiastic ten-dollar books. The exhibition, saving its excerpt from the writings of Charles K. Hoyt, was illuminative in recalling the baldness of American dramatic writing up to a period within comparatively recent years. The Drama League is supposed to be an organization for the uplift of the American theater. It might, in place of expending its savings upon this futile exhibition of American freaks, to the vastly better advantage and uplifting of the American drama have spent those savings in producing for the benefit and study of modern American writers for the stage and modern American theater audiences a single European play (though even considerably more ancient than

any native play here presented), such for example as "The Way of the World." There was no more good to be accomplished for the modern American theater by the Drama League's show of scenes from such historical American gimcracks as "André" and "Davy Crockett" than might be accomplished for modern American histrionism by a charade party at the Old Actors' Home—or in reviving for the present generation of actors an exhibition of the histrionic art of Mr. Julius Steger.

"Cception Shoals," by Mr. H. Austin Adams—a baroque *gelée* of Cosmo Hamilton, Ibsen and Emma Goldman, revealing in no sense nor direction the talents displayed in the same writer's excellent "God and Company."

Bourdet's "Le Rubicon," a highly comical *risqué* farce comedy done in the original French by the local Théâtre Français and so safely unintelligible to the local Irish *gendarmerie*. The only one of two things thus far well done by this theater.

"As It Was in the Beginning," by Arturo Giovanitti, presented under the auspices of the Stage Society—"Lilac Time" written by Artzibashef—a war play with Robert B. Mantell acting every character—Richard Wagner's "Kaisermarsch" on cornets with an obligato of automobile horns.

"The Morris Dance": Mr. Winthrop Ames succumbs to the Granville Barker delusion with disastrous results.

"Johnny Get Your Gun," a melancholic farce, by E. L. Burke.

"The Great Divide," Mr. Henry Miller's revival of Moody's greatly overrated play.

"The Life of Man," a poorly acted but admirably produced version of Andreyev's striking drama by the Washington Square Players, with an exhibition of stage illumination hitherto unsurpassed in the local theater.

VI

THE signal success of the one-act play stage established in the Comedy

Theater by these amateurs calling themselves the Washington Square Players brings back memories of the signal failure of the one-act play stage established in the Princess Theater several years ago by the professionals calling themselves the Princess Players. A somewhat tardy but nonetheless scintillating revelation of a still further reason for the not altogether untypical failure of this professional enterprise is vouchsafed the community in the recent dapper exposé which Mr. Holbrook Blinn has provided for himself. This gentleman, it will be remembered, was selected by the managers of the Princess as the director most likely to capture for their institution the glory of Maury and Antoine. The artistic stature of the director so selected, the gentleman has himself now at length indicated in his acceptance for production of a play by Mr. Mark Swan entitled "If," in his staging of that play, in his casting of that play and in the introduction of himself, through that play, to the public as a producer on his own.

First, the play. A dowdy tin-pot melodrama so badly thought out and so poorly written that it verges on the burlesque and in its process of disclosure brews titters where designs were distinctly the opposite. A play in no way superior to the cheapest thirty- and fifty-cent melodramas of the old Fourteenth Street Theater, or the old H. R. Jacobs' theaters in the West, and in every way inferior to even the least effective of the stage yellow-backs of Blaney and Carter, Hal Reid and Kremer, Davis and Swift. A play actually beneath the artistic procerity of the literature of Bert Standish. Of this, more anon.

Second, the staging. The play, a so-called dream play, reveals in its projection not the faintest differentiation between the actual and dream elements of its composition. (Mr. Joe Weber's staging of "Dream City," a burlesque music show done some ten years ago, was thrice as dexterous.) The stage illumination is of the vintage of the Wilbur Opera Company's production of

"The Chimes of Normandy"—a thing simply of green lights for the Gaspards and sharp white lights for the prima donnas. When, in the first act, a cloud is supposed momentarily to obscure the sun and darken a chamber, the foot-lights are turned down while the bright bunchlights outside the window of the room are seen still glaring at their top voltage. When, in the third act, the sun is setting and twilight is falling upon the roof of the house, the mere abrupt shoving of a cerise slide before the "bunches" in the wings is relied upon for the effect. This third and climactic act of the play concerns the desperate effort of a lad to signal by wireless to a neighbouring garrison and the attempt to shoot him on the part of enemy snipers hidden in a tree just below the right wall of the roof. Of this melodrama the producer has made burlesque by causing the lad, with plainly safer and easily accessible locations before the audience's alert eye, to sit in bland conspicuity at a high table directly in the center of the stage and directly in a line with the hostile tree!

Third, the direction of the actors. The actor entrusted with the playing of the leading rôle, that of an educated Japanese nobleman, is permitted to speak with a marked accent, the supernumeraries in the rôles of ordinary Japanese servants, etc., suddenly become soldiers, to speak the Broadway English of Mr. Willard Mack. The actor playing the old gentleman who has the dream is allowed to participate in the action of the dream and is then allowed suddenly to go to sleep again during a still further progress of the

dream in which, as before, he is visualizing himself as a protagonist. In the second act, an actor in the rôle of an enemy soldier is directed to stand plainly visible on a stairway just off a room wherein two characters are speaking in loud voice. The soldier on the stairway is supposed subsequently not only not to have seen the two characters, but, to boot, not even to have heard them!

I believe I have pointed out enough, enough to indicate the nature of the talents and capabilities of the sort of director selected for the Princess Theater robes of André Antoine. Young Mr. Edward Goodman, amateur director of the Washington Square Players, has already proved to the public and the critics that such professional directors as Mr. Blinn are mere impostors in the art of the theater, mere schoolboys in the appreciation of what is honourable in dramatic literature and what, in the way of staging such literature, is cogent, vigorous and beautiful.

The play "If," as one has doubtless inferred, seeks to point out that California is imminently in danger of invasion by a race even more inimical to the welfare of the United States than the moving-picture actors who have already invaded the state. Its clumsy logic the author has sought to excuse by making it appear that the events pass during a dream. This, one of the two familiar and transparent subterfuges of incompetent playwriting. The other is the getting over the dubious spots in the theme's logic by bringing the protagonist temporarily under the influence of liquor.



THE INFERNAL FEMININE

By H. L. Mencken

I

The women, woven, built and kneaded up
Of hydrogen, of azote, oxygen,
Of carbon, phosphorus, chlorine, sulphur,
iron,
Of calcium, kalium, natrum, manganese.

—John Davidson.

W. L. GEORGE is not only the cleverest, and by long odds, of the younger English novelists of the moment; he is also a specialist in the soul of woman, and has written many a fair pamphlet, leading article and dithyramb upon it. And yet, in his new book, "The Intelligence of Woman" (*Little-Brown*), he seldom proceeds, for all his skill, beyond that facile shocking of the respectable which consists of stating platitudes loudly and scandalously. The trick is an old one, and always works. Take it away, and nothing would remain of the works of George Bernard Shaw save a smell of brimstone and a few paltry stealings from Ibsen and Sardou. George Moore uses it; Anatole France uses it; Maximilian Harden uses it; Nietzsche used it. Dropping a thousand metres, I myself use it constantly, and shall put it to service in this present article; without it I would be a dull ass, indeed, and almost fit for the pulpit. As for George, he achieves a thumping platitude in his very title, for the fact that women are intelligent is so horribly patent that it takes all of their intelligence to make us forget it.

The *intelligence* of women? Go to, my dear Mon Chair! As well argue that Scotchmen are stingy, that Puritans have dirty minds, that cats are feline, that Jews are Jews. Women are not only intelligent; they have almost a

monopoly of the harder and more valuable sorts of intelligence; the Thing In Itself is as feminine as rouge and cruelty. Men are brave. Men are strong. Men have sentiment. Men are romantic, and love beauty. Men can sweat and endure. Men are damphools. But in so far as they are intelligent they are feminine—in so far as they show a sharp and penetrating sense they are still nourished by the milk of their mothers. "Human creatures," says Dr. George, borrowing from Weininger, "are never entirely male or entirely female; there are no men, there are no women, but only sexual majorities." Find me an intelligent man, a man free from sentimentality, a man hard to fool, a first-rate man—and I'll show you a man with a wide streak of woman in him. The good traits and qualities of the male, the marks of the unpolluted masculine, are at the same time the marks of the numskull. The caveman is all muscle and mush; without a woman to boss him and think for him, he is a truly pitiful spectacle, a baby with whiskers, a libel on God.

So far as I can make out by experiments on dogs and guineapigs, there is no biological necessity for this superiority of the frescoed sex. That is to say, it does not lie in any anatomical or physiological advantage. Women, in fact, have smaller brains than men, though perhaps not in proportion to weight. There are quite as many low, epicycloid brows among them. Their ears stand out as absurdly. They suffer from the same adenoids, gastritis, cholelithiasis, gastrectasis, nephritis—from the same pathological conditions that produce sentimentality, religion, patriotism, messianic delusions, alcohol-

ism, the worship of baseball players, intrigues with servant girls and the other typical neuroses of men. They have, in essence, the same appetites and weaknesses, the same fits of emotion, the same vanities. . . . Nay; their superiority is not a gift of the gods; it is a cultivated acquirement; their greater intelligence is an effect of use. Its springs are to be found, not in any inherent mental advantage, but in an obvious physical *disadvantage*—in the inferiority of their frames, their relative lack of brute strength. In the beginning, two things made them physically weak; first, the expensive imbecility of the process whereby they bring forth offspring, and secondly, the egoistic desire of men for mates of apparent inferiority and docility. And in the end, one thing has made them mentally strong: the dire necessity of counter-balancing this physical weakness by craft, their sheer need of brains. The Jews got their intelligence by the same enforced process; Nietzsche has described it at great length. The English have lost theirs by a contrary process; the Americans are going the same route.

That anyone should seriously doubt the intelligence of women, even enough to give excuse for a book demonstrating it, is one of the mysteries of human psychology. All the evidence upon which the doubt is grounded is evidence that is utterly worthless. What men mistake for lack of intelligence in women—and, as I shall show, very few men who actually know women ever honestly make this mistake—is merely a lack of technical proficiency. Two great forces keep them from acquiring that vast mass of small intellectual tricks, that complex of petty knowledges, that collection of cerebral rubber-stamps, which constitutes the chief mental equipment of most men. The first of these forces is the social necessity that has kept them pinned down, at least until lately, to a round of trivial duties in the home, and to a cloistered seclusion therewith. The second is the great social convention that, despite their new revolt against it, still holds up marriage

as the most honorable career open to them—as the gaudiest prize, in fact, that the practise of their conventional virtues can hope to win for them. The result is that women have neither the opportunity to acquire the jingling facility that passes for intelligence in men, nor the time. A woman's apprenticeship is too short, and she is too much distracted from its business by the more important enterprise of snaring a husband. Unintelligent women—I here speak comparatively, for no woman, not downright insane, may be reasonably called unintelligent—are commonly more successful in this pursuit than more intelligent women, if only because the latter have a keener sense of its absurdity; but their very success, by giving them a chance to gloat, enables them to exert pressure upon their superior sisters, and so we see both classes chasing men as hotly as ever an archbishop chased the devil. Hence their prevailing deficiency in technical equipment—in the little talents that serve the world in place of intelligence. Before the stenographer of 21 can master a tenth of the idiotic “knowledge” in the head of the male bookkeeper of 30, she has married the boss—or perchance the bookkeeper himself—and so tries to forget it as soon as possible. Before the girl cook picks up a fourth of the culinary subtleties that are commonplaces even to the negro chefs on Pullman dining-cars, she has caught a man and need bother about them no more, for he has to eat, in the last analysis, whatever she sets before him, and his lack of intelligence makes it easy for her to meet and shut off his academic criticisms.

For these reasons women sometimes take on a superficial and very deceptive air of stupidity. Because they cannot do all the puerile tricks that men can do—because they cannot add up a column of figures correctly, or understand baseball batting averages, or boss a gang of sand-hogs, or set a rat-trap, or understand the doctrine of the atonement, or distinguish between the platforms of two groups of job-seekers, or read with straight faces an editorial in the New

York Evening Post—because they are incapable of such petty feats it is assumed that they lack brains. But the truth is that their very incapacity in these matters is a proof of their superior intelligence. Their minds disdain so mean a virtuosity; their habitual mental dealings are with far more profound and respectable things; they inhabit a world above the world of trivial artifices. And what theory thus urges, the common experience of mankind bears out. No sane man would consult his wife about hiring a clerk, or trimming his cuffs, or voting for Assemblymen, or getting his shoes shined; but by the same token no sane man would fail to consult his wife about taking a partner into his business, or growing a moustache, or running for office, or sailing for Europe in time of war, or marrying off his daughter, or choosing his son's college, or combating a black-mailer, or joining a church. Such things are genuinely important; they lie at the foundation of well-being; an error in deciding about them has permanent and serious consequences. Here is where the superior mental grasp of women comes in; here is where they rise above the insignificant axioms and formulae of men; here is where they get elbowroom for the exercise of what is called their intuition.

Intuition? Bosh! Then it was intuition that led Darwin to the hypothesis of natural selection. Then it was intuition that composed "Die Walküre." All this intuition of which so much is gabbled is no more and no less than intelligence—intelligence so keen that it can penetrate appearances and get at the substance within. Women decide all the great questions of life correctly, not because they are good guessers, not because they are divinely inspired, not because they have some occult power, but simply and solely because they have sense. They see things at a glance that most men could not see with searchlights and telescopes; they grasp the essentials of a problem while men are still debating its mere externals. And the reason, as I have said, is not far to

seek. Their experience of the world, and especially what may be called their inherited experience, has forced them to be clear-headed and sharp-witted; above all, it has rid them of that vast burden of sentimentality which roosts upon the cerebrum of men. Thus they estimate persons and ideas, not in the terms of what would be pleasant, or in terms of what ought to be, or in terms of what must be if this or that insane assumption is sound, but in terms of what actually is. They are the supreme realists of the race. Apparently illogical, they are the exclusive possessors of a rare and subtle super-logic. Apparently unobservant and easily fooled, they see with bright and horrible eyes. Apparently the slaves of delusion, they are as alive to the indubitable fact as so many foxes. . . . Men, of course, also show a certain intelligence—rare men all the time, lesser men now and then. Men, too, sometimes have brains. But no man, I venture, is ever as steadily intelligent, as constantly sound in judgment, as little deceived by appearances, as the average woman of forty-eight. . . .

II

I HAVE said that women are not sentimental. The doctrine, I daresay, will cause a protest. The theory that they are is itself a juicy sentimentality; one sentimentality will be brought up to establish another. But an appeal to a few obvious facts will be sufficient to hold up my contention. Turn to the field in which the mental processes of men and women are most dramatically brought into conflict and contrast—to the field, to wit, of marriage. Surely no long argument is needed to establish the superior acumen and strategy of women in this business. The very fact that marriages occur at all is a proof, indeed, of their possession of greater intelligence than men, for it is plainly to a man's interest to avoid marriage as long as possible, and as plainly to a woman's interest to make a favorable marriage as soon as possible. The in-

telligence of the two sexes is thus directed, in this capital concern of life, to two diametrically antagonistic ends. Which intelligence commonly wins? I leave the verdict to the jury. All men fight it off; some men are successful for relatively long periods; a few extraordinarily intelligent and resourceful (or perhaps merely lucky) men escape altogether. But in the long run, as everyone knows, the average man is duly married and the average woman gets a husband. In the long run the majority of women, in this clean-cut duel, demonstrate their enormous mental superiority to the majority of men.

Not many men, worthy of the name, gain any valuable thing by marriage. Even assessing its benefits at their most inflated worth, they are palpably overborne by crushing disadvantages. When a man marries, indeed, it is no more than a sign that feminine strategy—*i. e.*, feminine intelligence—has forced him into a more or less abhorrent compromise with his own honest desires and best interests, and whether that compromise be a sign of his stupidity or of his cowardice it is all one. In the first case, he marries because he has been clearly overcome in a combat of wits; in the second case he chooses marriage as the safest of all forms of liaison. In both cases his inherent sentimentality is a powerful weapon in the hands of his antagonist. It makes him cherish the fiction of his enterprise, and even of his daring, in the very midst of the military operations against him. It makes him accept as real the play-acting that women always excel at, and at no time more than when stalking a man. It makes him, above all, see a glamour of romance in a transaction which, even at its best, contains as much of gross trafficking as the sale of a mule. The man never wants *all* that marriage offers and implies; he wants, at most, no more than certain parts; he wants, let us say, a cook but not a mother-in-law, a representative in society but not a prying partner in his business, a beautiful mistress but not a sharer of his bathroom, theology, income and se-

cret ambitions. But in order to get the thing that he wants, he has to take a lot of things that he doesn't want—that no sane man, in truth, could imaginably want—and it is to the business of forcing him into this disastrous bargain that the woman of his "choice" addresses the best efforts of her superior intelligence. Once the game is fairly set, she searches out his weaknesses with the utmost discretion and pertinacity, and plays upon them with all her resources. He is at a disadvantage from the start. His sentimental and unintelligent belief in theories that she knows quite well are not true—*e.g.*, the theory that she shrinks from him, and shies at marriage itself—gives her a weapon against him that she drives home mercilessly. The moment she discerns that sentimentality bubbling in him, he is hers to do with as she will. Save for acts of God, he is forthwith as good as married.

This sentimentality in marriage is seldom, if ever, observed in women. Their choice of mates is made with the brain and not with the heart, and quite naturally, for they have as much to gain by marriage as man has to lose, and is it any wonder that they seek to enter upon it on the most favorable terms possible, and with the minimum admixture of disarming emotion? Men get their mates, in the common phrase, by falling in love. That is to say, they account for the act of marriage, after feminine intelligence has made it practically inevitable, by enshrouding it in a maze of sentimentality and romance. Their defeat is thus made glorious; they clank their shackles with proud and even boastful shouts. Women are more cautious about embracing the conventional hocus-pocus of the situation. They never acknowledge that they have fallen in love, as the phrase is, until the man has formally avowed the delusion, and so cut off his retreat. With them, falling in love thus appears as a sort of afterthought, or, perhaps more accurately, as the spread of a contagion. The theory is that the love of the man has inspired it; that it was non-existent until the heat of his own flames set it

off. This theory, it must be admitted, has a certain element of fact in it. A woman, once the man of her choice is safely snared, not infrequently unbends a bit herself, and throwing off her intelligence and its inhibitions, indulges in the luxury of a more or less forced and mawkish sentiment. But it is almost unheard of for her to descend to this banality before the sentimental intoxication of the man is assured. To do otherwise—that is, to confess, even *post facto*, to an anterior descent—would bring down upon her the scorn of all her sisters. Such a confession would be an admission that sentimentality had got the better of her intelligence at a critical moment—and in the eyes of women, as in the eyes of the small minority of intelligent men, no treason to the higher cerebral centers could be more degrading.

This disdain of sentimentality in the chief business of their lives, and even of that higher form of sentiment which passes over into aesthetic sensibility, is well revealed by the fact that women are seldom bemused by mere beauty in men. Save on the stage, the handsome fellow has no advantage with the fair over his more Gothic brother. In real life, he is viewed with the utmost suspicion by all women save the most stupid, and their matrimonial enterprises are almost always directed toward men whose lack of pulchritude is accompanied by a counterweighting lack of vanity, and who are thus easier to bring down, and what is more, easier to hold subject. The weight of opinion among women is decidedly against the woman who falls in love with an Apollo; she is regarded, at best, as a silly creature, and at worst, as one pushing bad taste to the verge of indecency. Such weaknesses are resigned to women approaching senility, and to the more ignoble sort of women laborers. A shop girl, perhaps, may fall in love with a moving picture actor; a half-idiotic old widow may succumb to a college boy with shoulders like the Parthenon; but no woman of self-respect, even supposing her to be temporarily flustered by a

lovely buck, would yield to that sort of madness for an instant, or confess it to her dearest friend. To do so would be to become a hissing and a mocking. Women know how little such purely superficial values are worth; they choose their husbands as intelligently as they traffic in the marts; the voice of their order, the first taboo of their free-masonry, is firmly against making an æsthetic recreation of the serious business of marriage.

That men show no such sagacity is too well known to need demonstration. The baits they swallow most greedily are not edible and nourishing baits, but merely bright and gaudy ones. They fall for a pair of black eyes, a synthetic complexion, a graceful figure, or a shapely ankle, without giving the slightest thought to the fact that a whole woman is there, and that within the cranial cavity of the woman lies a brain, and that the habits and capacities of that brain are of vastly more importance to their future well-being than all imaginable physical stigmata combined. In brief, they estimate women, and hence acquire wives, by reckoning up their external aspects, which is just as intelligent as estimating an egg by its external aspect. Worse, they do not get at the realities even here; they judge by a mere glance, and are thus easily deceived by the most abominable frauds. Many a man never really sees his wife—that is, as her God sees her, and as the embalmer will see her—until after they have been married for years. A trained nurse tells me that even when undergoing the extreme discomforts of parturition, the great majority of women continue to sophisticate their complexions with pulverized dyes, and to give thought to the discreet arrangement of their hair. These transparent devices reduce the psychologist to snickers, and yet it must be obvious that they entrap and make fools of men. If a man has a noticeably sensible wife, he is almost apologetic about it; the ideal of his sex is always a pretty wife, and the vanity and coquettishness that so often go with pret-

tiness are erected into charms. In other words, men play the love game so unintelligently that they often esteem a woman in proportion as she conceals her native intelligence. Women seldom, if ever, make that blunder. What they esteem most in men is not beauty or social graces, but that complex of small capacities which makes up masculine efficiency and passes for masculine intelligence. This intelligence, at its highest, approximates their own. They thus respect it, and seek it out.

III

I HAVE accused Dr. George of retailing platitudes—an accurate charge, but still an unfair one. The indubitable, it must be admitted, is not always the obvious. His case needed no proving, but he proves it with noble skill. His book, indeed, is one of the most competent and persuasive that I have encountered for a long while, and he is particularly convincing in his discussion of feminism and of the future of marriage. In these remote outposts of civilization it is common to confuse feminism and woman suffrage. They are really no more closely related than a dog and its fleas. The suffrage movement is the intellectual slums of feminism; it attracts only those women who are almost as stupid as men; its central doctrine, that one sovereign peruna will suffice to ease all the belly-aches of humanity, is typically masculine in its sentimental imbecility. Of like sort are the male manias for prohibition, the initiative and referendum, the short ballot, preparedness, and the direct election of Senators. The sort of woman who believes in such nonsense is precisely the sort of woman who yearns to wear pantaloons and be a man—the sort who envies the oafish stupidity and hoggishness of men, and wishes she could put off her feminine intelligence and take on a masculine mushiness and boorishness.

In particular, the suffragette is one who is jealous of a definite masculine privilege—to wit, the privilege of pro-

miscuity in amour. Read the books of the chief suffragette wild women, and you will find running through all of them an hysterical denunciation of what is called the double standard of morality. The existence of this double standard seems to drive the poor girls half frantic; they bellow raucously for its abrogation, and demand that the frivolous male be visited with even more idiotic penalties than oppress the frivolous female; some even advocate gravely his punishment by surgery. All this, of course, is hocus-pocus. What the principal lady crusaders actually desire is not that the male be reduced to monogamy by sumptuary laws, but that his franchise of dalliance be extended to themselves. The most elementary acquaintance with Freudian psychology exposes their secret animus. Unable to snare males under monogamy, or, at all events, unable to ensnare males worthy the respect of other women (for the suffragette husband, in all candor, must be dismissed as a truly horrible creature), they leap to the theory that they would be more successful if the rules were easier. Nothing could be more absurd. If the rules were easier, they would find it even more difficult to get husbands than it is to-day, for, to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw, every sane man would prefer a stray kiss or two from a genuinely attractive woman to the whole devotion of the average suffragette. Thus the theory of the whoopers and the snorters of the cause, in its esoteric as well as in its public aspect, is unsound and imbecile. They are simply women who, in intellect, are two-thirds men—and the fact explains their failure to achieve presentable husbands quite as well as it explains the ready credence they give to political and philosophical absurdities. What the more sensible sort of men esteem in women is not a hollow and booming quasi-masculinity, but unmistakable femininity—*i. e.*, a decent reserve and self-respect—*i. e.*, the sort of intelligence which holds the emotions in check—*i. e.*, the highest sort of intelligence. The suffragettes are hopeless simply be-

cause they show no such reserve and self-respect, and hence no such capacity for inhibiting emotion, and hence no such intelligence. They are simply donkeys—as noisy and as stupid as men.

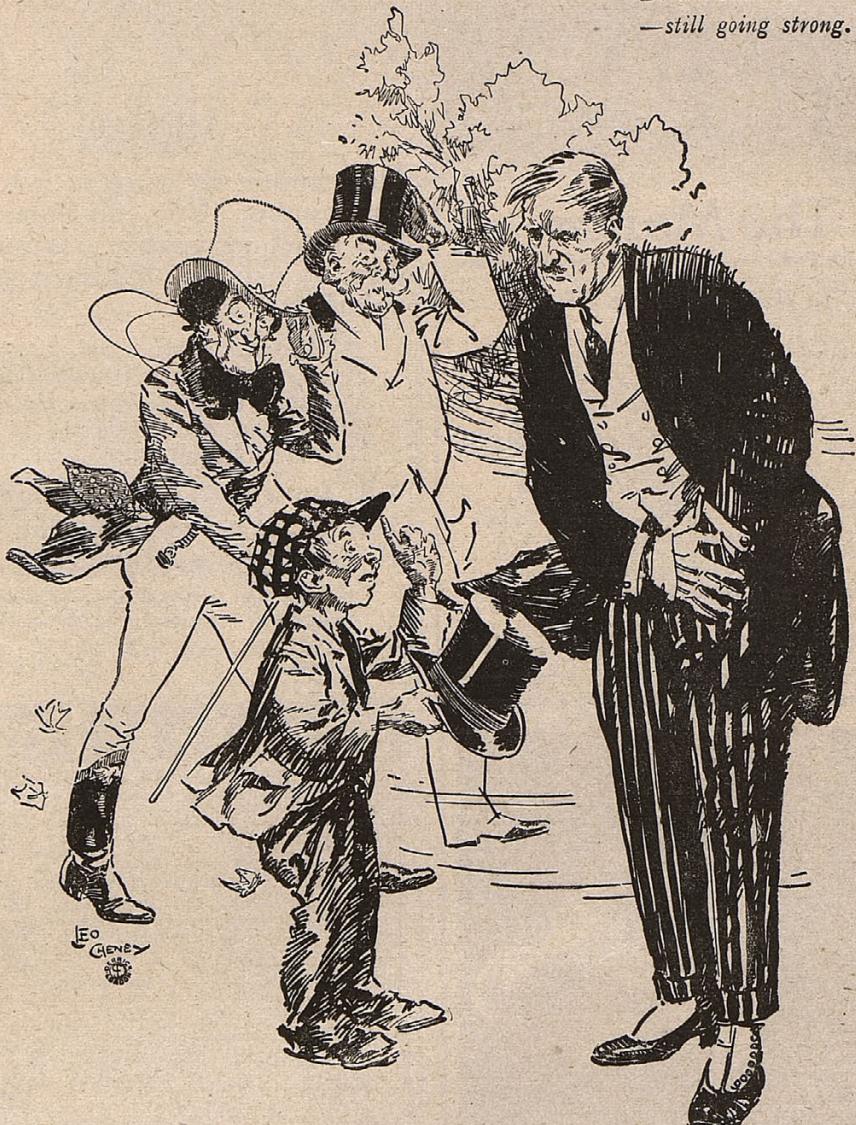
The feminists are a far more delicate and intelligent breed, which is the same as saying that they are far more feminine. The thing they ask for is not the privilege of being as blatant and emotional as men—*e. g.*, in politics—but freedom from those ancient conventions which force them to conceal and sophisticate their superior intelligence in order to flatter men's vanity. In brief, what they want is free opportunity in the world—opportunity to meet men on equal terms, without any need to encase the steel of their intellect in the velvet of etiquette and superstition. This end they will undoubtedly attain. Women might have attained it in any age of the world's history; in more than one age they actually did attain it; if they are still short of it today it is only because they have been seeking it but a brief time, and are still somewhat defectively organized and led. In detail, if not in gross, they have scored easy and innumerable victories. In the matter of property rights, they have come to full equality with men; in many of the American States, in truth, the wife is now favored above the husband. In the professions they have made steady progress in all directions where genuine intelligence is required—*e. g.*, they have conquered nursing, which requires quick and accurate thought, but failed in the law, which requires only a vehement disregard of sense. In business, they have completely broken down the old delusion of romance in sex, and so got their freedom quickly; not even the barber-shop weeklies gabble any more about stenographers seducing their bosses, and not even policemen seriously believe that shop-girls are sold into white slavery by theirs. And in the broader field of social relations they have gone quite as far, for divorce is now as easy in all civilized states to the woman as to the man, and the woman who has charm enough can adopt the

masculine end of the double standard with impunity, and suffer no more actual damage than she would suffer by having a tooth knocked out. . . .

The end? Who knows? As for me, I anticipate (and even hope for) a sort of revival of the matriarchate, a reinstatement of woman to the position that her superior intelligence entitles her to. Once on an equal footing with man, once completely emancipated from convention, she will not stop with equality. More, she will not be able to stop; her natural superiority will make it impossible for her to brook the pretensions of her inferiors. And why should she? Our theory that men should rule the world is, after all, no more than a theory; if we cling to it fanatically it is only because we love set ideas, fixed forms, anything to save us thinking; we may see it overturned as we have seen other apparently immutable principles overturned. What are men doing to deserve their kingship? Observe their performance in politics, the chief business of civilization. Here in the United States they have chosen from among their number one who is put forward as the man most fit, among all American men, to run the state. And what do we find when we examine this gentleman? We find a wholesaler of notions so infantile that they must needs disgust an intelligent suckling—an endless geyser of fallacies and sentimentalities, a cataract of unsupported assumptions and hollow moralizings, a man whose noblest flights of thought are flattered when they are called intelligible. This is the male champion. I do not venture upon the cruelty of comparing his preposterous ideas to the ratiocinations of a woman of like fame and position; all I ask of you is that you weigh them, for sense, for shrewdness, for respect for facts, for intelligent grasp of relations, with the ideas of the average midwife. . . .

Nay, I do not fear feminism. Feminism is the hope of intelligence. Feminism will save us from romance and superstition, from sobs and slobber, from guff and gush.

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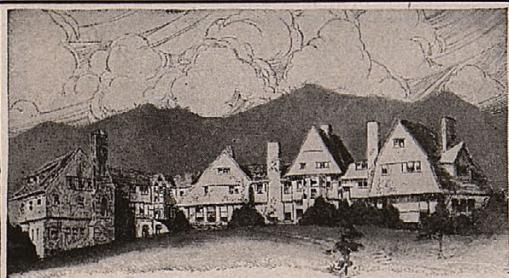
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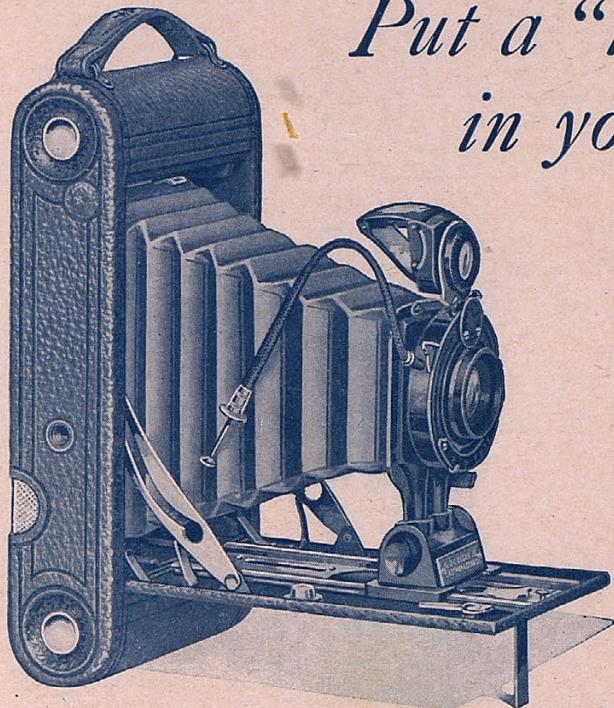
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